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Venables quits to pursue legal battle with Sugar



Venables: legal problems

By JOHN GOODBOY
SPORTS NEWS
CORRESPONDENT

TERRY VENABLES is to stand down as England football coach after the European championships this summer to concentrate on a series of court cases arising from his long-running dispute with Alan Sugar and allegations about his business dealings.

In an announcement yesterday, the Football Association said that Venables had decided

not to lead England's attempt to qualify for the 1998 World Cup because he feared that a "number of time-consuming legal battles" would interfere with his work.

Venables made up his mind last month, but the announcement was delayed as the FA asked him to reconsider over Christmas. The association will now set about finding a successor, with Kevin Keegan the front-runner.

Venables's decision to go at the end of his two-and-a-half-

year contract comes after a stream of media stories about his past financial activities, and he is known to believe that there has been an orchestrated campaign to discredit him since his departure from Tottenham in 1993. The FA said yesterday that he was determined to clear his name.

His wrongful dismissal case against Tottenham and its chairman, Mr Sugar, is likely to be heard in autumn and he also has three libel actions outstanding: one against *Par-*

rama, one against the *Daily Mirror*, and one in which he is being sued by Mr Sugar.

Venables said yesterday that he was going because the cases could be "problematic". "We would have a World Cup qualifying game around October or November and I could be in court for several weeks. I think it's a bit of an embarrassment to the FA, but in the circumstances I have made the decision and it gives them time to get somebody else."

He ruled out a change of heart even if England, as host country, won the European Championships in June. And asked if he might return at some time in the future, he replied: "I haven't thought that far ahead."

Venables's uncertainty about his future was not helped by the 14-man international committee to which he reports. Members have been wondering for months whether it was wise to extend his contract because of the poten-

tial for damaging publicity about his business dealings.

Similar doubts were ex-

pressed before his appointment in January 1994 and the FA chief executive, Graham Kelly, admitted at the time

"there has been a very concerted lobby against him getting the job". But the FA followed the advice of Jimmy Armfield, who said that managers and players believed Venables to be the best candidate.

Yesterday, Mr Kelly said: "He was overwhelmingly the

choice of the professional people. The progress he has made, his influence within the FA and influence on the game generally all reflect well upon the decision to appoint him."

Venables, 51, played for England at every level and had a successful managerial career before becoming chief executive at Tottenham. Since he took over as the national coach, England have played 14 friendly internationals, winning six and losing only one.

Football's disbelief, page 44

Israelis hail King Husain's peace trip

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN TEL AVIV

KING HUSAIN of Jordan yesterday became the first Arab monarch to visit Tel Aviv, winning the hearts and minds of its 400,000 people by declaring himself "among friends" and boosting the chances of peace in the Middle East.

In the most dramatic personal gesture since President Sadat of Egypt arrived in Jerusalem to engineer the beginning of the end of old hostilities nearly 20 years ago, the Jordanian leader defied the enemies of peace from both the Jewish and Islamic extremes.

Straight-backed, he showed not a flicker of fear although it took a quarter of the whole Israeli police force to protect him in an operation which all but shut down this most Jewish of cities.

"We love him. We admire him more than any other Arab leader," said Perry Meraz, 50, an import agent who stood for more than four hours to catch a glimpse of the royal motorcade sweeping by. "We will never forget that it was his grandfather [King Abdullah] who was the first Arab leader to die in the cause of bringing Jews and Arabs together."

The centrepiece of the trip was the opening of a trauma surgical unit at the hospital where Yitzhak Rabin died nine weeks ago. In a moving ceremony, the Jordanian monarch bade off his eloquent address at Rabin's funeral. With a sincerity of tone that affected even Jewish cynics among the 700-strong audience at the Ichilov hospital, he described Leah Rabin as "my sister" and said: "I be very frank, I feel at home here and among friends."

He was standing under a huge portrait of Rabin surrounded by thousands of red-and-white carnations and near to television monitors which only minutes before had shown a film of past Israeli and Jordanian wars.

The obvious failure of Rabin's right-wing Jewish assassin to halt the peace process on November 4 was demonstrated by the presence in the hospital of two Jordanian military officers undergoing treatment there.

Until the soldiers were shown on television, many ordinary Israelis could scarcely believe that Jordanian military personnel were now openly coming to Tel Aviv for treatment. One was the victim of a helicopter accident and the other was wounded while serving in Bosnia.

"We are all the sons of Abraham," the king said before helping to unveil a memorial wall to Rabin less than half a mile from the spot where he was shot.

The king, who defied criticism from Arabs at home to make his first official visit to Israel, infuriated the Palestine Liberation Organisation by visiting the largest Jewish city before travelling once to any of the areas they have "liberated" from Israeli occupation. "It is wrong of King Husain to visit Israel," said Jibril al-Rajoub, head of PLO security in the West Bank.

It fell to Gabi Barbash, director general of the hospital to answer the question being asked by every Tel Avivian I interviewed. "Until today, we have not been able to figure out why the Israeli people have so much affection for you despite wars, casualties and animosity that lasted for years," he told the Sandhurst-educated monarch.

"Your tears during the funeral, your majesty, melted our hearts. These were the tears of a friend. The peace is not just a piece of paper. Peace is people, daily life and an outstretched hand."

Shimon Peres, the Israeli Prime Minister, told the king: "I do not know any other element that can unite us more than your visit to our country."

Photograph, page 22



Claude Banks kisses his wife, Daphne, at their press conference in Hitchingbrooke Hospital yesterday

I am feeling fine, says woman who was pronounced dead

BY TIM JONES AND JOANNA BALE

THE woman who came back from the dead said yesterday that she felt fine as the doctor who declared her dead apologised.

Daphne Banks, who is still recovering in hospital, looked pale but was able to walk unaided as she appeared with her husband, Claude, at a news conference. She refused to comment on her experience and would only say: "I'm fine, thank you."

Her solicitor, Anthony Norrity, said that Mrs Banks, 61, had attempted suicide with an overdose at her home in Stoney, near Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, on New Year's Eve. David Roberts, a GP who is based in the nearby village of Great Smeetham, wrongly declared her dead.

Mr Norrity said: "Daphne had been extremely grateful and relieved that Daphne is alive and making very good progress. Daphne unfortunately suffers from epilepsy. As a result, she was not able to drive. Because of her increasing

years she was no longer able to walk into the village of Kimbolton, some distance from her home. She felt very lonely and isolated and started to suffer from depression."

"On New Year's Eve it came to a head. She could not face going on. She took a large quantity of her epilepsy tablets and also some sleeping tablets. She climbed into bed and just drifted off to sleep."

Mr Norrity said: "Mrs Banks had found his wife in the early hours of New Year's Day. He had called the ambulance service who arranged for a GP to attend the home. Dr Roberts examined Mrs Banks and told Mr Banks that she was dead. The doctor then called an undertaker."

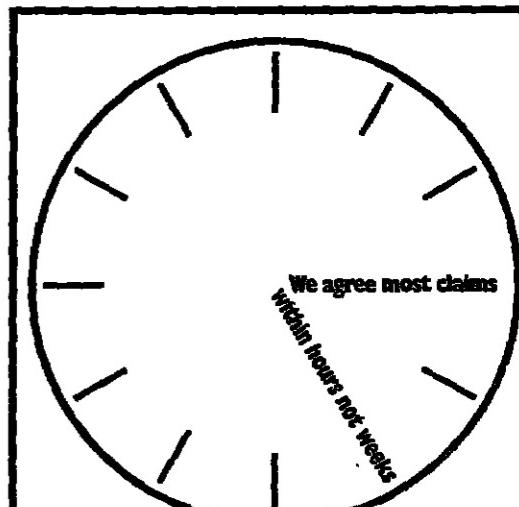
Ken Davison, a family friend, spotted a varicose vein

twitching, then heard her snore, soon after she was delivered to the mortuary of Hitchingbrooke Hospital at about 4.30am. An emergency resuscitation team was called and she was taken to an intensive care ward. After three days in intensive care Mrs Banks was transferred to a general ward where she took a get-well call from John Major, their local MP.

Mr Norrity revealed that Mrs Banks had little recollection of the next five days. He said: "Her next recollection was of her daughter leaning over her for a few brief seconds. She promptly went back to sleep but then drifted in and out of consciousness for

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Bitter row over school's pub-voucher prizes

BY JOHN O'LEARY
EDUCATION EDITOR

THE HEADMASTER of a comprehensive school was accused of encouraging underage drinking yesterday by offering pub luncheon vouchers as form prizes to children as young as 11.

Pupils at Garibaldi School in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, are being awarded £10 vouchers towards meals with their parents as term prizes for regular attendance and good conduct.

Only sixth-formers, many legally entitled to drink alcohol, are excluded.

Classmates have voted for the most deserving recipients of the first vouchers, to be presented next week by Bill McCosh, managing director of Mansfield Brewery and a school governor.

Vouchers can be cashed at the brewery's pubs which serve meals.

But the scheme has aroused controversy. Richard Willis, executive director of the National Committee for the Prevention of Alcohol and Drug De-

pendency, said: "This will initiate children into the whole psychology of drinking. It will get them used to public houses."

The local Methodist minister, the Rev Norman Bray, said: "The less familiar young people are with the inside of public houses the better... I don't think the school should be doing anything which might lead to young people turning to drink."

The 1,000-pupil school has an extensive reward system, which it

credits in part for a dramatic improvement in examination results.

The latest scheme is the idea of Bob Salisbury, the head teacher, who said:

"Every parent we spoke to already took their children out. It is a preposterous notion that the vouchers will be used for booze. They are only usable for meals with the family."

"We were looking for something inventive to reward pupils, but whenever you come up with a novel idea you must expect criticism."

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مكتبة من المصحف

Classless ticket for man on the Lords omnibus

Toffs, they say, can mingle with the opposite end of the social scale more easily than with the middle classes. Both ends have so much in common: horse-racing, wayward kids, the problems of illiteracy, debt, gin, rising damp and heating bills.

This truth is plain, watching a House of Lords debate.

You might as well be on the top deck of a number 15 London bus to Poplar and Canning Town. Everyone's terribly matey, everyone has his opinion, few know anything about it, half of them have a bee in their bonnet.

MATTHEW PARRIS POLITICAL SKETCH

lines tickets once they have let you on board.

Yesterday in the Lords, two new peers were admitted. The Baroness Hayman and Lord Sewel were introduced. This, the noble equivalent of presenting your season photo-pass (for life), involves a good deal of to-ing and fro-ing and bowing by people dressed in carpets.

After the ceremonials, the Lord Chancellor told them all

got their pensions, and an annoyed muttering began. One peer wondered why the unemployed couldn't be drafted in to do something useful, like processing pension applications. Ting-ting. And the bus moved on.

... To air pollution. Lord Campbell of Croy wanted to know what the government minister was going to do about it, especially "particulates from diesel". Lord Campbell of Alloway (Campbells and Mackays in the Lords are like Smiths and Patels in Poplar) grew restive: "What's it a particulate? What's it all about?"

Everyone laughed. Few knew.

Viscount Goschen explained the difference between diesel and petrol: "One puts out emissions of one type, and the other puts out emissions of the other type." Noble heads nodded.

Lord Caldecote was especially bothered by lorries thundering past all the time. Lord Stoddart of Swindon wished we could all go back to trolley buses. Lady Seear had personal experience of the adverse effects of diesel fumes and —

We reached the European Parliament. There were confused opinions about its costs. Lord Bruce of Donington

(Lord Angry) had a rant, his mates (used to it) chuckling. "And what are they going to do about it?" he barked.

Ting-ting. A new bus. A debate on homeopathy and alternative medicine. A nice, decent-sounding man with glasses called Lord Baldwin of Bewdley thought we should take it more seriously. In the queue behind him waited 26 peers, one a bishop, listed to speak. Each had examples (Lord Winston from his grandma): Some bore evidence of acupuncture, others of osteopathy. They discussed yoga ...

Ting-ting. I rang the bell. Time for our sketch to get off.

Labour leader welcomes Prime Minister 'yielding up' one-nation politics

Blair and Major clash on stakeholder society

BY PHILIP WEBSTER AND NICHOLAS WOOD

TONY BLAIR claimed last night that John Major had abandoned one-nation politics with his rejection of the Labour leader's vision of a stakeholder society. The two leaders locked horns over Mr Blair's so-called "big idea" which both admitted could become the battleground for the next election.

Mr Major told a breakfast meeting of business leaders that Mr Blair had opened up "clear red water" with the Tories by suggesting that he was returning to corporatism. The Labour leader had committed a "fundamental political error" as the stakeholders he envisaged were really special interest groups such as the trade unions.

"What I believe we are seeing is the tip of a plan which is nothing better than fancy packaging for new burdens on business of one sort or another," Mr Major said.

Mr Blair retaliated immediately at a hastily arranged Westminster press briefing by welcoming the attack on his plans for a society in which everyone had a chance to succeed as "yielding up" one-nation politics to Labour. He said it was absurd for Mr Major and Michael Heseltine to attack his vision as a means



Major: Labour vote a "reckless gamble"

to give power back to the trade unions. "They used to say it was only soundbites. But now they are attacking the central economic ground that we have chosen."

Meanwhile, Tory MPs pleaded with Baroness Thatcher not to rock the boat when she speaks tonight on the future of the Tory party. Her right-wing admirers, however, urged her not to compromise her beliefs in her lecture to the Centre for Policy Studies at the Swiss Bank Corporation in the City, although she is certain to back Mr Major and attack Mr Blair.

The disclosure by *The Times* that Lady Thatcher intended to warn her party against the perils of "lurching to the left" sent tremors through the Tory high command, although officials denied that Mr Major or Brian Mawhinney, the Conservative Party Chairman, contacted the former prime minister yesterday.

Fearing that Lady Thatcher's intervention could trigger another damaging bout of feuding between the old Tory factions, Sir Patrick Cormack, MP for Chingford, said on BBC Radio: "Of course, she could play a significant part in the election campaign but not if she seeks

to factionalise the Conservative Party."

Jerry Hayes, MP for Harlow, said it was vital the party was not split on Europe. "We want her to make speeches but supporting the Conservative Party, supporting the Government, supporting us on Europe, not a further round of bloodletting. I urge her, and urge her friends to urge her not to tinker."

But Iain Duncan-Smith, MP for Chingford, said he hoped Lady Thatcher's speech would reaffirm her core Conservative beliefs. "I hope like many others that she will remind us what it is that

Leading article and letters page 19



Thatcher: spreads the message of her foundation but has learnt humbler tasks too since leaving office

Tireless Thatcher bestrides globe

BY ALICE THOMSON, POLITICAL REPORTER

IN the five years since she lost both her job and the home that went with it, Baroness Thatcher has refused to spend her days in squalor and splendour in the House of Lords. In the last year alone she has visited first America, then Singapore, Rome, Madrid, Beijing, Hong Kong, Bahrain, America again, Japan, France, India, Venice, the Tory Party conference in Blackpool, America, Indonesia and Australia.

The United States is now her and Sir Denis's second home. If she felt betrayed by her own countrymen she always gets a spectacular welcome there and receives at least \$50,000 for appearances, sometimes making three speeches, and going to three drinks parties and a dinner in a day. She never discloses how much she has made.

Once when she changed planes in Hawaii at 3am with two hours to wait she insisted on being driven to see Pearl Harbor. Her two detectives, an assistant and Sir Denis act as her companions as she travels the globe, often by private jet, spreading the economic and political gospel of the Thatcher Foundation.

Apart from several operations on her teeth, her friends say she is not the exhausted and bitter woman portrayed by her detractors, but is staggeringly fit for a septuagenarian. She still receives more than 1,000 letters a day, rises at 5am and never goes to bed before midnight.

While few people in the Far East have ever heard of Tony Blair or Michael Portillo, Lady Thatcher only has to swing her handbag in Singapore and she is front page news. Yet the former prime minister has had to learn humbler tasks too. She has learnt to dial telephone numbers herself, remembered how to drive a car and how to cook more than scrambled eggs.

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Officials question loyalty of Bill Cash

BY ARTHUR LEATHLEY
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Euro-sceptic Tory MP Bill Cash faces a heated meeting tonight with constituency officials angered by what they regard as his disloyalty to John Major and his failure to consult grassroot Conservatives.

Less than two months after being selected to fight the newly created seat of Stone, Mr Cash has been heavily criticised for his conduct in the constituency and his decision to vote against the Government. Last night some officials in the Staffordshire constituency warned him that they would refuse to campaign for him in the general election. He was one of two Tory backbenchers who voted against the Government after a debate on the European common fisheries policy last month.

However, Mr Cash, at present the MP for Stafford, insisted last night that he had received "massive support" from officers of the association for his decision to vote against the Government.

At a meeting with eight constituency officers tonight, he is expected to be asked to explain his actions and be pressed on what one senior official described as his "appalling treatment" of local Conservatives.

Douglas Davis, chairman of the Fulford and Meir Heath branch of the Conservative association, said: "Many people will see his unforgivable decision to vote against the Government as a greater evil than defecting from the party because it shows total disloyalty and is a slap in the face to Mr Major."

Mr Cash has been under heavy criticism from some local Tories ever since his selection in November. After the withdrawal of the two other candidates on the shortlist, Mr Cash was elected unopposed. Formal complaints have been sent by local activists to Conservative Central Office, protesting over the way the association handled the selection process, particularly in failing to call replacement candidates to fight against Mr Cash.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Sinn Fein close to deal on weapons

The deadlock in the Irish peace process eased yesterday when Sinn Fein came close to accepting a confidential ministerial proposal that would allow the IRA to destroy its own arms. In its submission to the international commission on terrorist arms, the party said the proposal "may find acceptance" among republicans. Sinn Fein has appeared to accept the Government's insistence that the process must be verified independently.

A Government source gave a guarded welcome to the Sinn Fein paper. However, it was pointed out that the document also rejected the Government's demand for some weapons to be decommissioned ahead of all-party talks.

Plea for missing

A cross-party group of MPs signed a Commons motion calling on Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, to help to fund the National Missing Persons Bureau. Last year he suggested the bureau should seek lottery funds, but an application was rejected in December. The charity helps police and families around Britain.

Genetic adviser

An advisory committee on genetic testing is to be set up by the Health Department. The committee will ensure that genetic tests, which can show whether an individual is likely to suffer particular diseases, are supplied safely and used ethically. It will be chaired by the Rev John Polkinghorne, President of Queens' College, Cambridge.

BBC closes gap

BBC Television last year achieved its best ratings against ITV for six years. While the ITV share during the peak 6pm-10pm slot fell by 2.1 per cent to 41.5 per cent, BBC1 recorded a 0.4 rise to 33.6 per cent. ITV's peak-time lead over BBC1 narrowed by 2.5 per cent from 1994 totals to 7.9 per cent.

Girls die in fire

Lisa Jackson, 5, her sister Tanya, 2, and Vicki Charnock, 3, died in a fire at their council house home in Rotherham, South Yorkshire, early yesterday. Craig Jackson, 6, was in a critical but stable condition last night. Christine Jackson, 25, mother of Craig, Lisa and Tanya, had jumped from a window.

Dench double

Dame Judi Dench has been nominated for best actress and best actress in a musical in the 1996 Laurence Olivier Awards. Nominations for best actor include Michael Gambon, Daniel Mays and Alex Jennings. The winners will be announced at the Grosvenor House Hotel, London, on February 18.

Jackpot claimed

The third National Lottery jackpot winner has claimed the last £14 million share of the £42 million payout from last week's double rollover draw. Camelot said yesterday. The ticketholder, like the first two, requested no publicity. It was not known whether the winner was a syndicate or an individual.

£100,000 total

THE TIMES Christmas Appeal in aid of the Royal Marsden Hospital

By midday yesterday The Times Christmas Appeal on behalf of the Royal Marsden Hospital Children's Cancer Unit had raised £91,366.57p. With donations still coming in and a number of tax rebates due, the final figure is expected to approach £100,000. The hospital was "enormously grateful" to Times readers.

Women MPs fight to save all-female shortlists

BY JILL SHERMAN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

SENIOR Labour women MPs yesterday began a campaign to protect all-female shortlists after this week's judgment in one constituency that the policy amounted to sexual discrimination.

Harriet Harman, Labour's health spokeswoman, led calls for party leaders to appeal against a Leeds industrial tribunal's decision and, if that failed, to find another way of helping more women into Westminster.

"We remain totally and wholeheartedly committed to one of our fundamental principles, equality for women, and ensuring that our democracy is representative," she said.

"This judgment is a serious but temporary setback but we will continue to find ways of achieving that objective."

There are signs that Labour leaders are increasingly wary about an appeal. They argue that it might not succeed or could be drawn out. Ms Harman and her colleagues believe that such caution would send the wrong message to would-be female candidates. They are also determined to counteract calls by Roy Hattersley to drop the "silly" scheme immediately.

The women's committee of the party's national executive, which includes Ms Harman, Margaret Beckett and Clare Short, will meet on Monday to draw up alternative schemes for the 14 constituencies where the process has been suspended, for use if an appeal fails.

Helen Jackson, co-chairwoman of the 39 Labour women MPs, said that she would be urging Tony Blair and Tom Sawyer, the party's general secretary, to appeal against the judgment.

Party officials said last night that any decision about an appeal would have to wait until the tribunal's full written judgment had been received.

They played down any chance of an alternative scheme being adopted before the next election.

Woman 'back from dead' feels fine

Continued from page 1

the next couple of days. On Friday, a doctor explained what had happened but what he told her did not seem to sink in. Even now what actually happened seems to be just a story about somebody else. He said that Mrs Banks would not be coming home for "a little while". She and her husband wished to thank all hospital staff, well-wishers and the undertakers firm, Cobbold's, for their "timely alertness".

Mr Banks dabbed tears from his eyes

as he listened to the solicitor read the statement. Mr Northey said that the couple had been married for about 40 years and that Mr Banks was hoping that his wife would make a quick recovery.

He said the couple had been offered "considerable sums" for media interviews, but they had decided not to accept any offers and did not intend to give any press interviews.

Earlier yesterday, the local health authority said it planned to take "no further action" over the doctor who

wrongly pronounced Mrs Banks dead. Cambridge and Huntingdon Health Commission said Dr Roberts did not present a danger.

Last night Dr Roberts issued a statement through the Medical Defence Union: "I would like to say how sorry I am about what has happened and I am very pleased Mrs Banks is making good progress. I have been in close contact with Mrs Banks and her family."

Body and Mind, page 16

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No pit, no torment: damnation is not as cruel as it is painted, says Anglican report

Church blocks the old road to fiery Hell with good intentions

By RUTH GLEDHILL
RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

TRADITIONAL images of hellfire and damnation are wrong, says a Church of England report which criticises some past teachings for trying to "frighten people too much."

"Sadistically expressed" views of eternal torment and punishment left "searing psychological scars on many," it says today. "Christians have professed appalling theologies which made God into a sadistic monster."

Hell should not be seen as eternal torment, but as nothingness, say the senior clergymen who drew up the report *The Mystery of Salvation*, by the Church's doctrine commission. They say Hell is the final and irrevocable "choosing of that which is opposed to God so completely and so absolutely that the only end is total non-being."

The report warns that Christians cannot afford to ignore the realities of damnation and final judgment. The Church had to communicate its belief in a "saving God... in a society where there is no agreement about the peril in which we stand, and in which religious language has no natural and agreed reference point."

People have to be saved from sin and death, but society's missing sense of ultimate accountability "has meant losing the shape and meaning" of life. "What is clear, as the century moves to its close, is that for many people in our culture there are not only no more divine certainties, but no 'divine'."

Folk religion proved there was a continuing quest for God, but the form of worship had become a matter of personal choice. In defining the sins people need saving from, the report argues that the Church must take account of changes in society caused by feminism.

All the major branches of theology evolved in a context in which the dominant role of men passed for the most part unquestioned and indeed unnoticed," the report says.

While the core of sin is often represented as "overweening



Dr David Jenkins, top left; political hell is fascism; Dante, top right; head signs and loud wailings; Sartre, above left; simply, Hell is other people; Lord St John: selfishness — or a missed train?

pride", if women had played a greater part in developing the concept of sin, they might have placed more emphasis on the failure to assert and take responsibility for oneself.

The former Bishop of St Albans, the Right Rev John Taylor, said that to tell people they were in peril would mean little when they were seeking self-fulfilment and satisfaction, when they "are having a very good time and their lottery number might come up on Saturday evening — undoubtedly people are in considerable peril, but they are not aware of this."

Different cultures had different evils from which people desired salvation, he said.

The Bishop of Newcastle,

the Right Rev Alec Graham, agreed. "In everybody's life there is evidence of some degree of virtue. But as to what is final and ultimate, matters rest in God's hands. We are quite clear that if and when we all wake up hereafter and we find that we have been saved, this will be solely by the grace of God," he said.

The report is certain to prompt discussion of how people see Hell.

Dr David Jenkins, the former Bishop of Durham, said: "I am afraid of contributing to Hell now and I would like to think God can save everyone from Hell. I don't think we can dodge our responsibilities but I don't believe He would keep us eternally in Hell."

Hell on earth was "what we produce when we follow our own interests and feelings without regard to anyone else — politically, it is fascism."

Lord St John of Fawsley, former Leader of the House of Commons and Master of Emmanuel College Cambridge, said Hell on earth was standing in a rainstorm on the platform of an isolated railway station at 12.01 in the morning, knowing that the last train left at midnight. More seriously, it was "that state of total selfishness, excluding all love of God and other human beings."

Malcolm Bradbury, author and literary critic, said Hell was a literary party at the Groucho club in London, being forced to listen to authors talking about money and their agents.

This view echoed perhaps the pithiest definition, by Jean-Paul Sartre, the French existentialist, who said: "Hell is other people."

Dante Alighieri, the medieval Italian poet, gave the traditional view in his poem *The Divine Comedy*: "There sighs, lamentations and loud wailings resounded through the starless air, so that at first it made me weep; strange tongues, horrible language, words of pain, tones of anger, voices loud and hoarse and with these the sound of hands, made a tumult which is whirling through that air forever dark, and sand eddies in a whirlwind."



Apocalypse then: traditional, 15th century portrayal of the fiery pit, in the school of Hieronymus Bosch

Academic's new revelations dismiss 666 as a wrong number

THE BIBLE'S Book of Revelation, inspiration for images of the final judgment and for horror films such as *The Omen*, is not about the end of the world at all, according to new research published today.

It is an historical account of the Christian movement in the first century, says Barbara Thiering, an Australian academic who has analysed mythic themes such as Armageddon, the Beast whose number is 666, and the Great Harlot clothed in purple and scarlet.

Using the *peshar* technique, a way of uncovering different layers of meaning in the text, Dr Thiering says

Revelation is not a vision of the future but an accurate, detailed account of events in the early church up until AD144.

Dr Thiering, whose book *Jesus the Man* challenged traditional Christian beliefs in events such as the virgin birth, says that Jesus did not die on the cross but remained in deep seclusion for 40 years after the crucifixion, partly for political reasons and partly because he was observing the celibate rule of his community of ascetics.

During these years he continued to lead his party of new Christians, directing their movements until they reached Rome, she says. In

an era when the Christians were seen as the heretics, the beast "rising out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on its horns ten diadems" was the anti-Pope, Simon Magus, she says.

Jezebel was mistress of Magus, the character who in western tradition became Dr Faust who sold his soul to the devil, and could be accused literally of heresy, she says.

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse were priests who visited villages, riding on horses because of their high status, and bearing banners in an appropriate colour for the season, she argues.

The lion, calf man and eagle were the four evangelists who wrote the four Gospels.

Although she is unusual in using a skilled method of biblical analysis to draw out her conclusions, Dr Thiering is likely to be one of many who offer new interpretations to Revelation as the millennium approaches.

Her research was dismissed by the Rev Jonathan Jennings, spokesman for the Church of England, who said: "This sounds distinctly far-fetched."

"This certainly does not fit with the Church's understanding of the Book of Revelation, which believes it to be the mystical vision of St John the Divine."

British cinemas celebrate birthday with best weekend

BY DALVA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH cinemas are celebrating the highest grossing weekend in box-office history. They took more than £7.24 million last Friday, Saturday and Sunday, an exhilarating start to the year in which British cinema celebrates its centenary.

It beat the £6.65 million taken in July 1993 on the weekend that *Jurassic Park* opened nationwide. However, the latest success has come from a combination of films catering for a variety of tastes, rather than one runaway success. The highly acclaimed thriller *Seven*, with Brad Pitt and *Something to Talk About*, starring Julia Roberts, were the main attractions.

Dave Thurston, director of operations for Entertainment Data International (EDI), said there was such a cross-section of films that "everyone went to the cinema": the choice also included the latest James Bond, *Goldeneye*; Jim Carrey's *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls*; and *Babe*, which uses special effects to depict a

talking pig that believes it is a sheepdog.

John Wilkinson, chief executive of the Cinema Exhibitors' Association, which represents 90 per cent of cinema screens, said: "Most people are usually a bit broke after Christmas and with the rollover of the lottery, people are spending more than usual on that. So it is rather fantastic that in the weekend when all these calls upon the purse were happening, we hit the highest figure ever."

Nigel Green, joint managing director of Entertainment Film Distributors, which distributed *Seven*, said that the film had taken nearly £2.7 million: "It is one of the biggest openings in Britain — the biggest ever for an independently released film, as opposed to a Hollywood studio. Films are acquired at script-stage, and we knew we had a good script. When we saw the film, we knew it would do well. It's part of this renewed interest in cinema. We're very pleased about the

Burns discovery divides academics

BY GILLIAN BOWDITCH, SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

A YOUNG Scots academic claims to have found 40 new poems by Robert Burns. News of the discovery, which coincides with a three-day conference on Scotland's national poet at Strathclyde University in Glasgow, comes in the bicentenary year of Burns' death.

The poems, without their author's name, were spotted by Patrick Hogg, 35, a writer working on a book entitled *The Patriot Bard*, in two newspapers of the 1790s. His claims have divided the Scottish academic community.

The *Edinburgh Gazetteer* and the London paper the *Morning Chronicle* were both radical newspapers to which Burns was known to have contributed and with whose editors he corresponded.

Mr Hogg's theory is that as an excise man Burns would have to have been very careful about what he wrote.

Mr Wilkinson said that cinema is enjoying such a boom that about 100 screens are expected to be built this year, compared with about 55 last year.

Hogg said they "just seemed to jump out of the page" at him. Having read the collected works of Burns many times, the poems seemed to him to be a natural fit. One was entitled *Arius* which Mr Hogg translated as "from the ploughman". Burns's occupation in the bicentenary year of Burns' death.

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and the London paper the

Morning Chronicle were both

radical newspapers to which

Burns was known to have

contributed and with whose

editors he corresponded.

Dr Kenneth Simpson, director of the Centre of Scottish Cultural Studies at Strathclyde University and the organiser of the Burns conference that starts today, said authorship would be extremely difficult to prove.

Dr James Mackay, a Burns biographer, has seen a few of the poems and believes they are not by Burns. "There is a style to his work that is difficult to define, but if you have been studying it for a lifetime, you can spot a Burns poem a mile away. These are definitely inferior in every respect."

The poems will form part of a BBC Omnibus documentary, *Ploughboy of the Western World*, to be broadcast on January 22.

Mrs Vaughan, who said she had drunk a single gin and lemonade, walked past Mr Price, 49, and said she felt his hand go under her waistcoat to her thigh. She told the tribunal: "I said 'Take your

hand away from me' and pushed his hand. When he moved his hand towards me I said 'I have told you, take your hand away from me.'

Mrs Vaughan claimed Mr Price was smiling and laughing.

As she walked away, he made a remark and she added:

"He cupped his hand and flicked it across my face, touching the tip of my nose. As

he did that I put my left hand up and then hit him with my right hand on the side of his face."

Mrs Vaughan, of Rogiet, near Newport, said she went to find her husband Peter, a company sales manager, who was also attending the event as a prize winner. Mrs Vaughan, who said she was "shaking like hell", told her husband: "John Price touched me up and I have hit him. He's on the floor." After calming her down and asking the men's captain to look after her, Mrs Vaughan approached Mr Price at the bar and told him to "sort himself out".

Mrs Vaughan, who stood at the hearing to demonstrate the alleged assault, said she was suspended from playing golf two months later by Elwyn Harris, the club committee chairman, after she refused to sign a paper stating there had been no assault. She also rejected his request to apologise to Mr Price "because he was a businessman and I was a woman".

The tribunal was adjourned until March.

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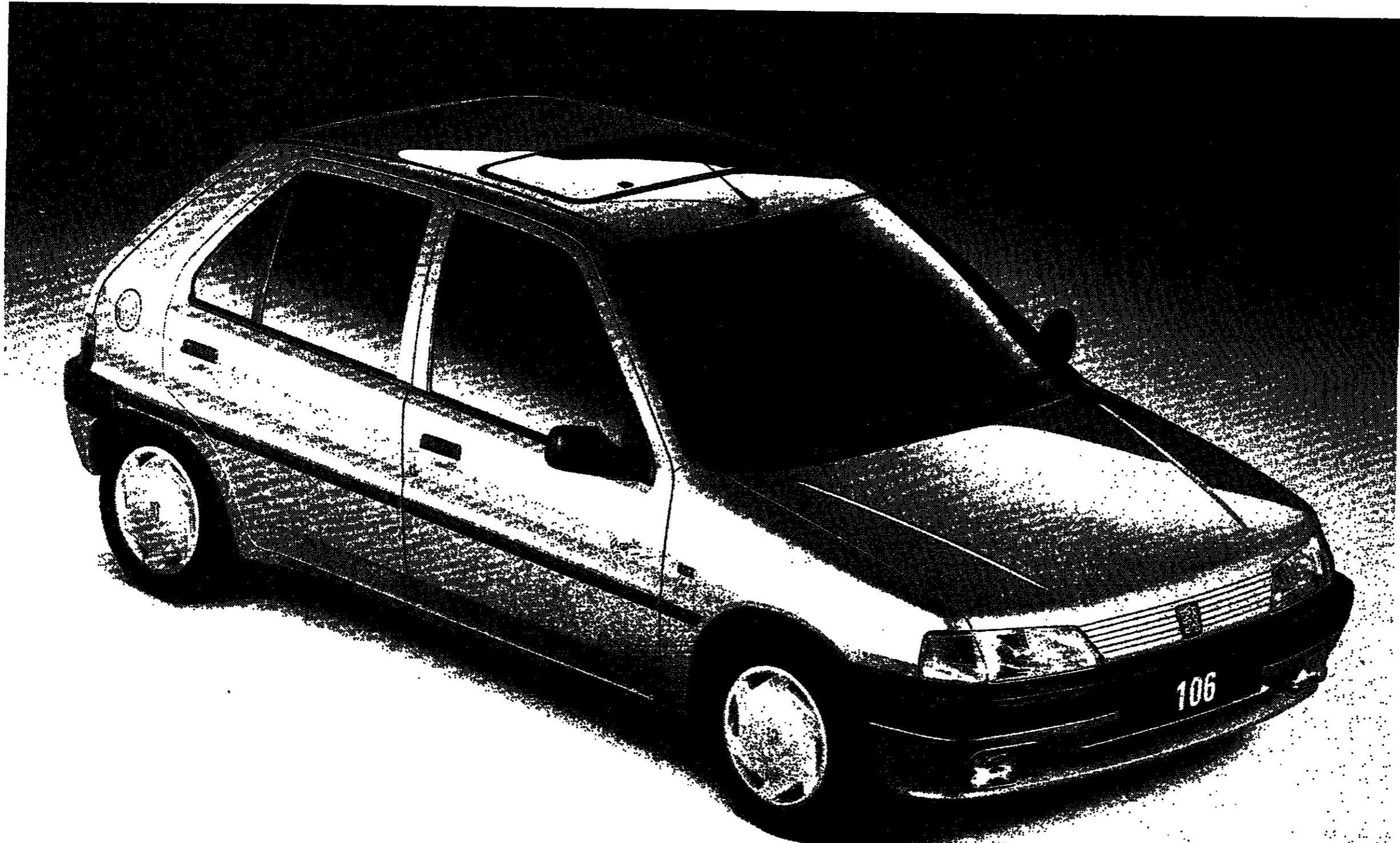
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ICE, SEE ARING.

RAF crews escape as 'dogfighting' Tornados collide

By PAUL WILKINSON AND MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

FOUR crewmen ejected to safety yesterday when two RAF jet fighters collided while apparently engaged in mock combat at about 800ft. Eyewitnesses said the Tornado F3 air defence aircraft touched wings as one was completing a circular manoeuvre over open ground about nine miles from RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire.

One of the Tornados, from 56 Squadron and valued at about £17 million each, crashed 400 yards from the farm of Bill Drury at Rowston. "One plane was doing a big circle and as it came out of the circle it started flying north," he said. "Another plane com-

ing from the north collided with it right above my house. They touched wings and then dropped out of the sky."

One of the pilots is a student flyer although "very experienced", according to Group Captain Mal Gleave, station commander at RAF Coningsby, a training base to convert airmen to Tornado F3s. He added: "All student airmen who come here have been through all stages of training or they are returning to these airplanes after different duties."

The four RAF crewmen were taken to Lincoln County Hospital by two search and rescue helicopters. An RAF spokesman described their condition as "walking wounded". Group Captain Gleave said one of them might be transferred to hospital in Nottingham as a precaution.

"I'm very relieved that they managed to eject safely. They were operating at low altitude so they had a longer time available after they ejected."

A board of inquiry was launched immediately into the collision, which brings to eight the number of Tornado F3s lost in incidents since 1985. Group Captain Gleave declined to speculate on the reasons for the collision but confirmed that the two Tornados were flying in close formation.

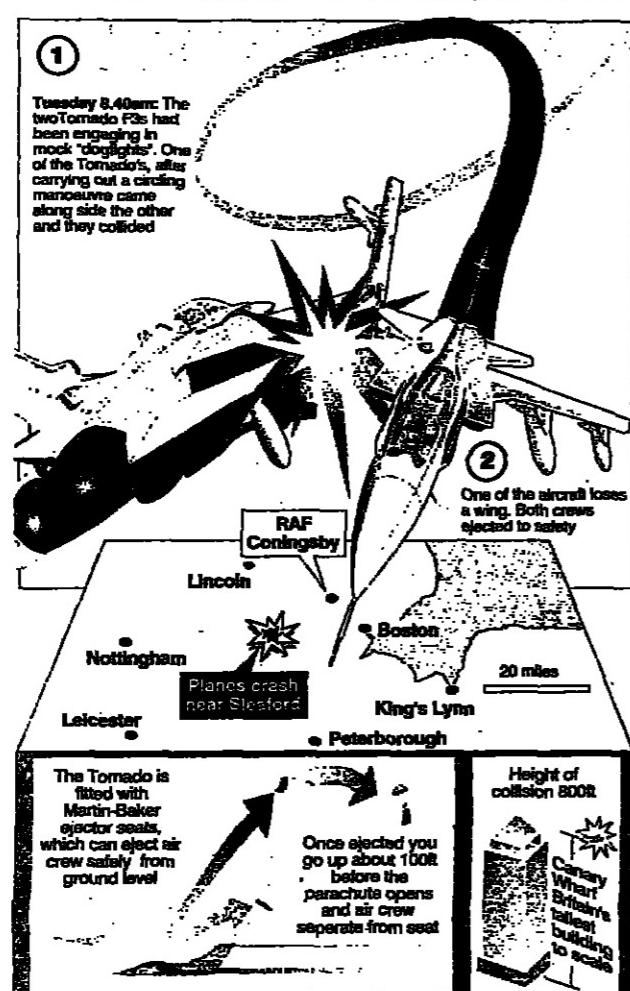
The crash happened at 8.40am, nine miles west of Coningsby. Stewart Rhodes, another eyewitness, saw it as he was working on the roof of his shed in the nearby village of Ewerby.

"I saw the aircraft dogfighting at about 700 to 800 feet," he said. "They were travelling at a fairly high speed. We are used to seeing Tornados dogfighting at low level, but in this case they were fairly high. Suddenly I saw a flash, I thought it was a flare, then I realised they had collided."

"One of the planes started to spiral, he had lost his right wing. The plane hit the ground, it was a fireball and there was a huge crater."

The collision brought complaints from locals that it had been "an accident waiting to happen". Tracy Macham, 30, who lives a few hundred yards from where one of the planes crashed into a field, said: "We often see the planes flying really low and you can't help but think they might hit the village one day."

Group Captain Gleave said: "The feelings of the local community are something we bear in mind at all times and we understand people's fears, but these kind of incidents are very uncommon. The aircraft were not training over residential areas."



Coventry air crash prompts new rules

BY HARVEY ELLIOTT

AIR CORRESPONDENT

TIGHTER controls on foreign aircraft are likely after an investigation into the crash of an Algerian cargo jet, in which five people died.

The crew of the Boeing 737, which had been chartered to carry cattle, was tired after ten hours on duty and could not fully understand instructions in English. The aircraft was not equipped to receive automatic landing guidance; the crew did not carry out proper pre-landing checks and a permit to operate the charter had not been obtained from the Transport Department, the Air Accident Investigation Branch says.

The three Algerian crew and two British animal handlers died after the plane hit an electricity pylon and crashed into woods, narrowly missing a housing estate, as it came into land at Coventry airport in December 1994.

The Transport Department said yesterday that it is to consult British airlines about tighter rules on the use of foreign jets for charter flights.

The Civil Aviation Authority is to make more frequent safety checks on foreign planes and to take part in international checks on countries with poor aviation records.

CORRECTIONS

Mr Harold A Whelehan

On December 19 1994 we reported on the crisis in the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. That article contained references to Mr Harold Whelehan, the former Irish Attorney-General, which suggested that he had deliberately disregarded his duties as Attorney-General over the extradition of a paedophile priest to Northern Ireland. We now accept that this suggestion was unwarranted and apologise to Mr Whelehan for any hurt and embarrassment caused. We have agreed to pay a sum to a charity of Mr Whelehan's choice.

□ The vice-chairman of the BBC board of governors (report, yesterday) is Lord Cocks, and not Mr David Scholay.

Superman's son thanks Gemma

BY A STAFF REPORTER

AN 11-year-old disabled girl who wrote to Christopher Reeve, urging him not to give up hope after the riding accident that left him paralysed from the neck down, received his thanks yesterday.

The message from the screen Superman was passed on to Gemma Quin, who has been in a wheelchair since a road crash in 1992 by the actor's 16-year-old son Matthew.

Gemma, from Liverpool, wrote to the actor after his accident at an equestrian event in America last year. Her meeting with his son took place in London at the launch of Push 2000 to raise money for spinal injury research. The International Spinal Research Trust hopes to raise £500,000.

Gemma's father Michael said: "Matthew came over to her and said his dad had asked him to personally thank Gemma for her letter. She has kept in touch with him and recently sent him a fax inviting him over to Liverpool, but we haven't heard anything yet."

Reeve, who is patron of the event, said in a message to his father: "It is good to know that you are still fighting the good fight. I am sorry I have not been able to visit you yet, but I am still recovering myself."

Gemma's mother, Alison, said:

"Since my accident, I have talked to a lot of people about the prospects for finding a cure for paralysis. The fact is we are on the threshold of a new era in medical science. Treatments for this condition are right around the corner. Thousands who are still stuck in these chairs will get up and walk."

"This is a worldwide problem which afflicts several million people, but it is one which international science is quite confident it can solve."

Afterwards Matthew, who was joined by his sister Alexandra, 12, and their mother Gae Exton, spoke of the slow recovery of his father, who hopes to walk again within ten years. "He is going great now he is out of the hospital and at home. He is hoping to come over to England as soon as he can."

"But it all depends on how he is doing. His improvement is unreal. I can see the difference just between visits. He can come off the respirator for one hour and ten minutes a day when he breathes by himself. He is fighting all the way." Alexan-

dria, who like her brother attends school in London, said: "To be up and walking is his ambition."

Push 2000 will take place between May 14 and July 10. Three paralysed people in wheelchairs will aim to complete the 1,200-mile trip from Land's End to John O'Groats, during which they will visit 12 spinal injury units.

Ian Walden, director of the event, said: "There is a real and growing enthusiasm which now exists across society to end the permanence of paralysis caused by spinal cord injury. Research funded by the trust has demonstrated that damaged spinal cord nerve fibres can be persuaded to regenerate and restore function and sensitivity."

"We are some way from developing treatments which are ready for clinical trials but we are making most encouraging progress."

Simon Barnes, promotion manager for Push 2000 and one of those taking part, broke his back on an assault course in 1984 and organised a similar event — The Great British Push — ten years ago.

He said: "You may wonder why three guys with broken backs would want to take on this epic slog. But if you consider the slog that faces paralysed people every day of their lives it will help you realise that pushing 1,200 miles over 62 days in a wheelchair isn't really all that challenging."

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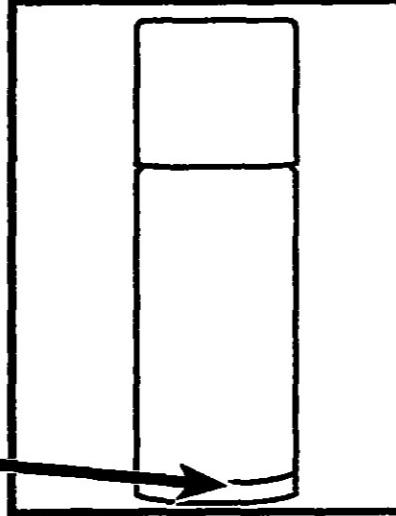
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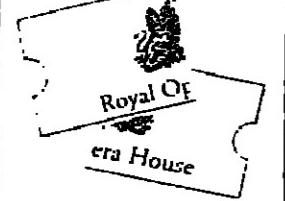
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'Two-nil, two-nil,' chant campaigners as they outwit massed ranks of security guards



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Newbury protesters win again as police halt work on bypass

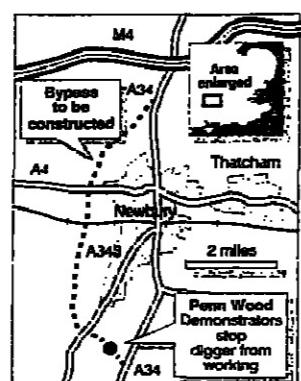
BY ADRIAN LEE

WORK on the Newbury bypass was abandoned yesterday for the second day running when protesters overcame security guards, throwing themselves under a digger and tearing equipment from contractors' hands. With two days of the £100 million project gone, little more than an hour's work has been completed, about 50 small trees cleared from the southern tip of the bypass route.

The protests mean taxpayers are footing a bill of at least £20,000 a day for the security operation alone. The 14-week contract for clearance work includes a figure of £500,000 to employ between 300 and 400 private guards. Policing is costing £5,000 a day.

The aborted start was condemned by David Rendel, the Liberal Democrat MP for Newbury, who said it was extraordinary that demonstrators had again won the day.

The 150 guards had marched onto the site, at Great Penn Wood, Hampshire, flanking a mechanical digger. About a dozen protesters in a small camp were brushed aside and hedges and trees were flattened as work appeared to



begin in earnest just before 9am.

But the highly organised protesters, using mobile telephones and CB radios to summon reinforcements, surged forward to surround the digger and forced it to stop operating as the guards fought to drive them back, linking arms in a tight circle.

Two protesters managed to get beneath the machine's claws, while others huddled in holes where trees had been uprooted. During the struggles one protester and one security guard suffered leg injuries.

Inspector Frank Connor of Hampshire Constabulary said: "It is not a police job to recall its cracks."

move these people out, it is a matter for the security guards. The main thing is that nobody gets injured." Mr Connor's announcement that work had finished for the day was greeted by cheers and chants of "two-nil, two-nil".

Susan Millington, a protest co-ordinator of Newbury Friends of the Earth, said: "Whatever they throw at us we obviously have the intelligence and imagination to outwit them peacefully." Despite yesterday's minor injuries, the conflict was largely good-natured and limited to pushing and shoving.

The Highways Agency said the contractor, which it will not name, could ask for more money if the size of protest was larger than anticipated. It is thought the guards are being paid about £50 a day, including food and accommodation, bringing the daily cost to at least £15,000 at present. Coach and mini-bus hire adds another £750 a day to transport the guards to work sites.

Earlier yesterday, campaigners attacked the base of the bus company which takes guards from their living quarters, 14 miles outside Newbury, and forced it to recall its cracks.

At each one different "cells" with specialist knowledge pass on their expertise; some are tree defenders", while

others, including those behind the successful tripod protest on Monday, are skilled in tried and tested tactics in the battle known as "reclaiming the streets".

Simon Festing, of Friends of the Earth, said: "We have many different cells which work on our own style of tactic. At the moment our main strategy is to take the fight to them as much as possible, as you saw at the coach firm this morning. At the heart of the philosophy is the

simpler the better. A lot of it goes back to Gandhi and the whole idea of peaceful protest. One of the keys is outsmarting them and coming up with new ideas."

Two of the key members of the strategy group are thought to be a man called Jai and Rebecca Lush. She played down her role. "Any meetings we have are very informal and held on stairs or in the pub. We just bash out ideas. It's imagination and ingenuity."

Ragtag army devises its tactics in the pub

WITH their unkempt looks the growing band of protesters might appear to be a ragtag army, but they have planned their campaign carefully for six months. Tactics are fixed at regular strategy meetings held round camp fires, in the pubs of Newbury or in the cramped town centre office of Friends of the Earth.

At each one different "cells" with

specialist knowledge pass on their expertise; some are tree defenders", while

Dinosaurs die yet another death

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

Ministers may lose traditional accessory

By NIGEL WILLIAMSON
WHITEHALL CORRESPONDENT

COLLAPSING stars have joined the list of cancer scares, and the dinosaurs are claimed to have been among the first victims.

A

new theory from an American astrophysicist says that a dying star in the Milky Way would send out millions of particles that could cause tissue damage to living things on Earth.

Dr Juan Collar, of the University of South Carolina, has calculated that a star within 20 light years of Earth collapses about every 100 million years. The dinosaurs died out 65 million years ago.

A star's collapse — caused when it runs out of material to burn — generates a huge number of invisible, weightless particles called neutrinos, which spread outwards.

Dr Collar's theory, to be

proposed in the journal *Physical Review Letters*, joins about 200 explanations of why the dinosaurs died. The most probable remains the impact of a huge asteroid or comet, altering the climate.

Neutrinos are chargeless, massless particles which usually pass straight through everything they meet without harm. But Dr Collar argues that a blizzard of neutrinos at a certain intensity would affect the nuclei of tissue atoms, causing fatal cancers.

Using a fictional scenario of an oil slick off the English coast, the Cabinet Office demonstrated how a minister on the scene could hold conferences with and receive diagrams from his private secretary in Whitehall, and conduct three-way press interviews. Civil servants and ministers would access the new system via voice recognition and finger-print identification.

Roger Freeman, the Public Service Minister, said: "The exotic is becoming commonplace and the fanciful is becoming reality." Not long ago the systems which had been demonstrated "belonged solely in the world of *Star Trek*", he said. Now every minister could expect to be using such technology by 2000.

A Central Information Technology Unit has been set up, reporting to Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister.

Gallery celebrates surreal bequest

By DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

EDINBURGH will have one of the world's best collections of Dadaist and Surrealist works thanks to a bequest to the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art.

Masters such as Dali, Deleuze, Duchamp, Man Ray, Magritte and Miró are represented in the collection left by Gabrielle Kieffer, champion golfer, benefactor and collector of modern art, who died last December aged 87. Manuscripts of the period had always been bequeathed to the gallery. Mrs Kieffer also bought Surrealist-influenced works by Francis Bacon and Lucian Freud.

Among some 136 paintings,

sculptures, prints and drawings are Bacon's early *Figure Study I*, 1945-46,

featuring a tweed overcoat,

hat and dying flowers; Magritte's *Magic Mirror*, his 1929 painting that plays with words; and Deleuze's enigmatic *Street of the Tram*, 1938-39, a dreamlike image of two nudes and a tram car in an industrial landscape.

The manuscripts and

artists' books include cor-

respondence largely unpub-

lished, between Dali and

Andre Breton, from 1930 to

1939. They show sharp differ-

ences of opinion over Surreal-

ism and Breton's efforts to

make Dali conform to Surre-

alist orthodoxy, according to

Richard Calvocoressi, keeper of the Scottish National Gal-

ery of Modern Art.

Other letters dating from

1933-34 reveal Breton's anx-

ety over Dali's fascination with Hitler and his ambiva-

lent attitude to Lenin. "In one

of February 3, 1934, Breton

informs Dali that the deci-

sion has been taken at a general

assembly of Surrealists to

exclude him from the group

because he has been found

guilty of 'counter-revo-

lutionary acts tending to the

glorification of Hitlerian Fas-

cism'. The decision was re-

voked later and friendly rela-

tions resumed because Dali

defended himself so well."

Mr Calvocoressi said that

the Kieffer bequest would

complement the rich col-

lection of Dada and Surreal-

ist work already at the Scottish

gallery — offering the most

comprehensive collection of

its kind in Britain and one of

the finest in the world. "This

is unquestionably the most

exciting gift since the gallery

opened in 1960," he added.



Bucks to the wall: security guards formed a human chain in a vain attempt to keep protesters from a digger

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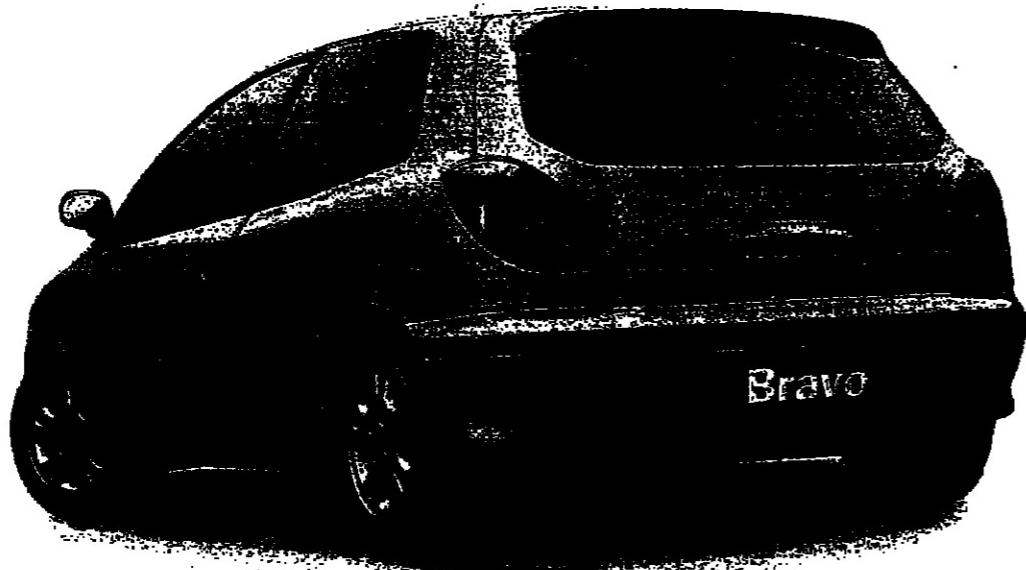
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DRIVEN BY PASSION FIAT

106

مدى انت الأصل

Senior officers sceptical as ministry orders retreat from the high street

Services forced to seek recruits in Jobcentres

By MICHAEL EVANS
DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

MORE than 130 high-street recruiting offices are to close after the Ministry of Defence decided to advertise Armed Forces vacancies in 1,100 Jobcentres. The new route into the Royal Navy, Army or RAF, initially proposed to save money, is now seen as a way of enticing more young people to enlist.

The Services cut manpower by 30 per cent at the end of the Cold War, and potential recruits still appear to believe recruiting has stopped. However, many sections, especially the infantry and the Parachute Regiment, are suffering serious shortages.

Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, who with Nicholas Soames, the Armed Forces Minister, announced the new move, said yesterday that the employment service would be able to "reach those who may not have considered the job opportunities that the forces can offer". She added: "In particular people may not be aware of the skilled jobs available such as mechanics, drivers, cartographers, cooks and many more."

Some senior military figures, however, are sceptical about the Jobcentre scheme meeting recruitment needs and are seeking to save some of the military recruitment offices earmarked for closure.

The present 215 traditional service offices are to be reduced to 82-39 tri-service careers offices and 43 others, most of which will be for Army recruiting. These offices will be used mainly for the second



Millions of Britons answered the call to enlist during the First World War in such institutions as soldiers' rest rooms, but it was not until 1961, after National Service came to an end, that the first recruiting "shops" began to appear in high streets.

The earliest form of recruiting, for the Royal Navy, had to be carried out by press gangs who "persuaded" men to join a ship's crew. Pressing people into service started as early as the 13th century but ceased, albeit unofficially, when improved pay and conditions in the early 1800s encouraged voluntary recruits.

The navy was always short of volunteers and the press gangs, composed of tough petty officers and seamen, scoured seaports for likely recruits. Real sailors did or died, and rather than return empty-handed, the gangs sometimes seized people who knew nothing about the sea. Sheriffs and mayors often supplied the press gangs with people by clearing out the prisons. However, after the end of the Napoleonic Wars, in 1815, such forms of compulsory enlistment were no longer required.

phase of recruiting, interviewing young men and women sent by the Jobcentres.

The closure of 133 recruiting offices would not lead to more redundancies, the MoD said.

Staff who work at the centres are posted on a temporary basis and will be redeployed to other jobs. Mr Soames was unable to say how much

money would be saved by the closures, but it is expected to be several million pounds.

He said he was hopeful that if the Northern Ireland peace initiative continued successfully, servicemen and women would be able to walk around in public in their uniforms, a practice banned for the past 25 years. He believed this would

help to raise the profile of the Services and encourage recruitment.

Recruiting offices used to be a major target for the IRA and regular surveillance was carried out by police anti-terrorist units. In 1990 a bomb went off at an Army recruiting office in Derby and in 1992 a soldier who worked at the centre was shot in the head.

The decision to use Jobcentres to advertise vacancies, which currently stand at 17,500, followed a pilot scheme at 99 Jobcentres in six locations, including Edinburgh, Gloucester, Norwich and Swansea. In six months there were 321 enlistments and 67 applications are still being processed.

The Army will be undermanned by around 2,000 soldiers this year, mainly in the infantry, Royal Artillery and Royal Armoured Corps. Some 400 Gurkhas due to be made redundant have been reprieved to help to meet the dramatic shortfall in recruits, and a £1,400 cash bonus is now offered to soldiers to persuade them to stay on for three years.

Commanding officers of battalions are to be given an extra £1.5 million to be used specifically for recruiting in their local areas.

Commodore Ian Somerville, director of naval recruiting, said the Royal Navy wanted to take on just over 5,000 personnel in the next financial year, including 1,200 for the Royal Marines.

Mr Soames insisted that the manpower cuts in the Services had not gone too far but stressed the need to carry on recruiting. "Who would have



Pilot-scheme recruits James Stallabrass, left, Kerry Duckenfield and Scott Robertson

thought a year ago that we would be sending 13,000 troops to Bosnia?"

He dismissed as "fatuous nonsense" claims by Labour that the shortfall implied a failure in the recruiting system.

He said the Services, like everyone else, were operating in an "extremely competitive market". With the

Jobcentres' help it would now be possible to reach a broader range of people. He said he hoped more from the ethnic communities would be attracted to a career in the forces.

Mr Soames said that the cuts in manpower had largely affected older personnel and there was always a need to recruit young people. He added:

"From today young men and women will be able to walk into any of the 1,100 Jobcentres and see the many skilled jobs that are available in the three Services."

"I hope that young people who had not previously considered a career in the armed forces will be attracted by the wide variety of jobs on offer."

Footballer fined for airport bag theft

The Arsenal footballer David Hillier was fined £750 yesterday after he admitted stealing a bag at Gatwick. The midfielder's solicitor said the theft was an act of stupidity which had destroyed Hillier's soccer form. He was now on the transfer list.

Magistrates at Crawley, West Sussex, were told that Hillier, 26, stole the bag with his friends Wayne Burnett, 24, a Bolton Wanderers player, and Adam Old, 31, a computer consultant. The three men, from London, were each fined £750 and ordered to pay £970 compensation to the bag's owner, a Danish businessman.

Port picketed

More than 100 sacked Liverpool dockers picketed the port of Sheerness, where workers were recruited to replace them. Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, which also runs the Kent port, dismissed 500 dockers in September after they refused to cross picket lines of a separate dispute.

Smuggler escapes

A Belgian drug smuggler was on the run yesterday from Downview Prison in Banstead, Surrey. Jaques Maeze, 51, serving 4½ years, was reported missing on Tuesday night. Police believe he may have been driven away in a Vandall Cavalier seen earlier in the prison car park.

Class had to strip

The headmaster of a school where children had to strip as a teacher searched for a stolen pen has apologised to parents. Twenty 12- and 13-year-olds undressed to their underwear at the Cardinal Wiseman Roman Catholic School in Potter's Green, Coventry.

Turned in

A car that sped away from a policeman in Torquay was chased by a patrol car to Newton Abbot — where it took a wrong turn into a police station car park. Two youths will appear in court tomorrow charged with aggravated vehicle-taking and burglary.

CPS man jailed

Andrew Woodfine, 26, a legal administrator for the Crown Prosecution Service in Durham, was jailed for 12 months by Durham Crown Court for supplying Ecstasy and possessing amphetamines. He sold two Ecstasy tablets to a plainclothes detective at a rave.

Boat fire deaths

A mother and her two children who died as fire swept through their riverboat on the Oxford Canal at Wolvercote, Oxfordshire, on Tuesday had just been told they were to move to a council house. Sarah Lowe, 30, Ben, 6, and Louise, 3, were asleep when the fire started.

War pensions

Staff are being recruited to ensure that all war widows entitled to a pension receive it by April. The 1995 Pension Act restores the £13-a-week pension to war widows whose subsequent marriage has ended. However, the payment may reduce benefits received.

East eats West

Civic leaders from Stupini, near Moscow, met their British counterparts in Slough, Berkshire, home of Mars bars in the UK, to celebrate the opening of the confectioner's first factory in Russia. The two parties exchanged somewhat predictable gifts: Mars bars.

Hospitals unnecessary

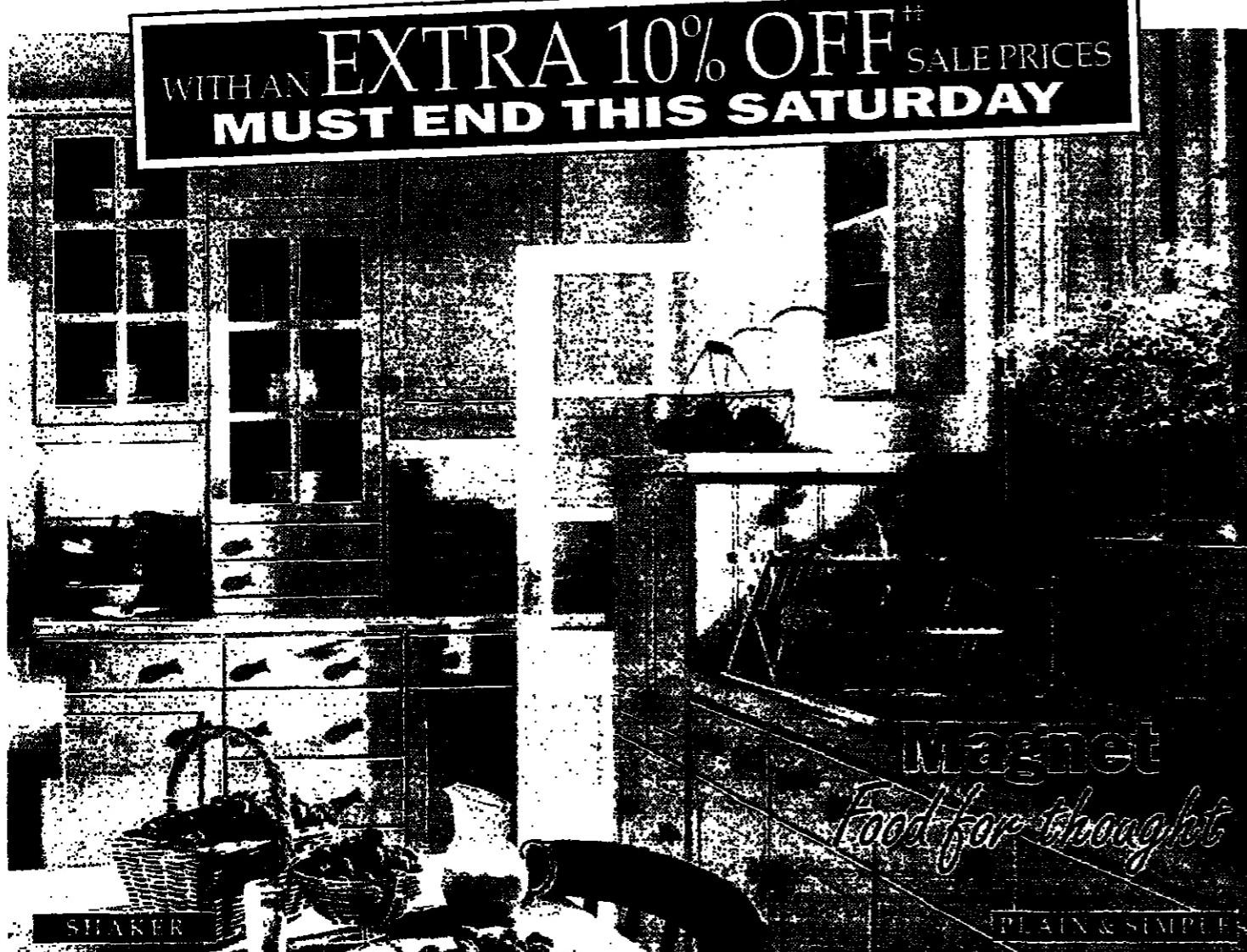
Hard-up Church storms another bishop's castle

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Clarke's staff fails to pay bills on time

SMALL businesses yesterday called for Kenneth Clarke to be put on a blacklist after government figures showed that more than a quarter of the Treasury's bills are paid late.

Last year the Chancellor's department failed to settle 28 per cent of its bills within 30 days or when required by contracts, the worst figure for any government department.

The Federation of Small Businesses said: "We have long called for a blacklist of large companies who do not pay up on time and the Chancellor and the Treasury should go on this list." Mr Clarke has announced several schemes to persuade businesses to settle bills promptly.

Labour will ask for an explanation in the Commons this afternoon. The Treasury blamed temporary staff problems, adding: "We try to pay a lot of our bills in ten days."

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Dorrell denies £1bn efficiency drive is rationing

Hospitals told to reduce 'unnecessary' Caesareans

BY JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

A DRIVE to reduce unnecessary Caesarean sections was launched by Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, yesterday as part of a campaign to save £1 billion being wasted on ineffective NHS treatments.

Almost 100,000 women undergo Caesareans each year and the rate has more than doubled in the past 20 years. In some hospitals, more than 20 per cent of women have the operation, compared with fewer than 10 per cent in others. Mr Dorrell said the rates in some hospitals were "surprisingly high" and should be questioned.

Launching the document *Promoting Clinical Effectiveness*, Mr Dorrell said it was vital for doctors and health authorities to keep pace with the rapidly changing clinical scene. More than 30,000 medical journals are published around the world and it is impossible for most doctors to keep track of the latest advances. Under the initiative,

they are to be provided with easily accessible information on effective treatments and may be required to justify clinical judgments that differ from the norm. Authorities will be required to show that they are switching funds from ineffective treatments to those of proven value.

Mr Dorrell cited hospitals with high Caesarean rates as an example that doctors and managers should be examining. "It doesn't mean the clinicians are wrong but it does mean that they have to explain why they are out of line."

Latest figures on Caesareans, collected by the National Childbirth Trust, show a national rate of 15.3 per cent of births in 1993-94, the highest ever. Rates varied between hospitals from under 10 per cent at Bedford and Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire; to more than 20 per cent at Buchanan Hospital, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex;

Leighton Hospital, Crewe, Cheshire; and Worcester Royal Infirmary.

Rates were also above 20 per cent at Bradford Royal Infirmary, Hammersmith, and Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea hospitals, London; Liverpool Maternity Hospital and St David's Hospital, Bangor, Gwynedd. Large hospitals that deal with more complex cases would expect to have higher Caesarean rates.

Many hospitals routinely perform Caesareans on women who have previously had one, although there is no evidence that it improves the outcome. Women complain that they are being subjected to an unnecessary operation with increased risks at a critical point in their lives.

The National Childbirth Trust says that increased medical intervention in labour, such as foetal monitoring, and fear of litigation is driving the trend to more Caesareans. Mary Newburn, head of poli-

cym research, said: "Fear of litigation should not be driving maternity care. Caesarean birth is a major operation from which it takes six weeks to recover, at a very important time for the whole family — getting to know and care for a new baby."

Promoting Clinical Effectiveness, which is backed by the Royal Medical Colleges, says that the treatment provided by doctors "is still insufficiently responsive to the changing evidence of best practice". Mr Dorrell denied that the aim was to ration treatments, but was to obtain the best quality of care at the best value. "We are using science to address questions of value, not to reduce costs," he said.

Harriet Harman, the Shadow Health Secretary, dismissed Mr Dorrell's campaign for clinical effectiveness as a "smokescreen for rationing". "It is nothing but a drive to cut costs," she said.

Debbie Chippington Derrick and her son Maxwell, the only one of her four children not born by Caesarean

'Evidence on natural births being ignored'

AFTER her third Caesarean section, Debbie Chippington Derrick decided the only way to ensure that her fourth pregnancy would end in a natural birth was to pay for it. She spent £2,500 hiring an independent midwife and had her son, Maxwell, at home.

"It was a straightforward eight-hour labour. I had no pain relief, no stitches, no intervention of any kind. Had I been under the NHS I would have been automatically booked for a Caesarean.

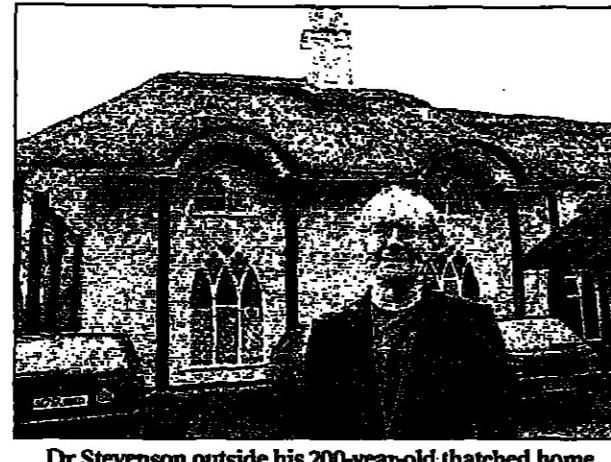
As soon as you have had two, the attitude of the obstetricians changes."

Mrs Chippington Derrick, 36, of Camberley, Surrey, said the *Guide to Effective Care in Pregnancy and Childbirth*, produced by the UK Cochrane Centre in Oxford, showed the chances of a natural birth did not depend on the reasons for the first Caesarean.

She said her first Caesarean was carried out after a series of interventions, such as pain relief which left her drowsy

and a foetal heart monitor had left her unable to cope. Her second Caesarean, in a different hospital, was performed when she was ten days overdue, after attempts to induce her over eight days had failed. In her first pregnancy she had been three weeks late.

"That is what women encounter all the time. If you happen to be in a different hospital, a different policy will be followed. Evidence on effectiveness is being ignored."



Dr Stevenson outside his 200-year-old thatched home

Hard-up Church storms another bishop's castle

BY RUSSELL JENKINS AND VEEMA SHAH

THE Bishop of Worcester is expected to be the next senior Anglican cleric to face "eviction" from his historic home, the Church Commissioners confirmed yesterday. Hartlebury Castle, where the Right Rev Philip Goodrich lives, could fetch £750,000.

The new Bishop of Portsmouth, Dr Kenneth Stevenson, has already been asked to leave his 200-year-old thatched residence, Bishopswood, in Fareham, in two years' time and to move his family into a £300,000 six-bedroom Victorian villa.

There is a question mark over the future of 14 other bishops' homes under a Church of England seven-year review.

Dr Stevenson's chaplain, Canon Howard Baker, said yesterday of the rehousing plan: "He was unhappy initially, but the decision here was to move into not only a smaller house but one which will suit the needs of a bishop in the 21st century."

Dr Stevenson, who was enthroned shortly before Christmas, said: "We are looking forward to moving into a better house. The thatched roof is the largest in the south of England and needs to be replaced in ten years and we cannot get a grant for that."

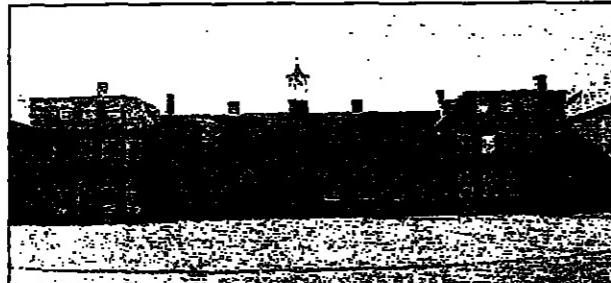
Behind the impressive facades of episcopal castles, palaces and residences, their occupants are struggling to pay heating bills. Mary Loudon, who interviewed clergy for her book *Revelations*, said: "Never go and stay with a bishop. It's freezing."

Bishops are paid £24,590 a year, plus a car and an allowance to pay a small staff for their office and house. Under church guidelines, their residences should have a dining room for ten to 12 guests, a commensurate kitchen, drawing room, study, office, chapel, sitting room and six bedrooms.

Bishops' homes still under review include those at Blackburn, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Lichfield, Lincoln, Liverpool, Norwich, Ripon, the Isle of Man, Southwell and Truro.

Miss Loudon believes the Church should sell all clergy homes, pay the occupants enough to buy their own, and hire offices and meeting halls.

This would help to solve financial difficulties and make clergy face the housing problems their parishioners have, she says.



Worcester's Hartlebury Castle may be sold for £750,000

Medieval marvels vie with Gothic elegance

BY RACHEL KELLY, PROPERTY CORRESPONDENT

THE Church of England owns three castles and five palaces among its 44 bishops' homes, in addition to Lambeth Palace, home of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

A claim to be the most elegant could be made by Auckland Castle, home of the new Bishop of Durham, the Right Rev Michael Turnbull, which has survived the church's review.

Its Gothic gateway is topped by a turned clock and weather vane. The house has state rooms with high ceilings, some covered in coats of arms, and eight bedrooms.

The grandest may be Peterborough Palace, built partly in

the 11th century on a far bigger scale. It has seven lavatories and ballroom-sized bedrooms. The hall can seat 100 for lunch and the sitting room takes 50.

The future Bishop of Peterborough — the appointment is vacant — will live in part of the palace but the commissioners are looking at ways to make the building pay its way.

Bishopsthorpe, home of the Archbishop of York, stands in 19 acres of gardens. Originally a manor house, it was later enlarged and rebuilt. Wolvesey Palace stands on the site where the bishops of Winchester have had their homes since the 12th century.



Debbie Chippington Derrick and her son Maxwell, the only one of her four children not born by Caesarean

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Chechen rebel leader vows bloodshed will continue until Kremlin soldiers leave

Russian troops surround hostage-takers at border

FROM THOMAS DE WAAL
IN MOSCOW

RUSSIAN troops ringed a convoy of buses carrying Chechen gunmen and dozens of captives on the border with Chechnya yesterday on the second day of a hostage seizure, which has thrown the Government into crisis.

Earlier, the gunmen freed thousands of hostages they had held overnight in Kizlyar hospital in Dagestan. The incident appeared to be heading for a peaceful conclusion until the convoy's exit was halted by a bridge blown up by the Russian Army at the village of Pervomayskiy and a new round of negotiations began. The fighters threatened to start shooting hostages if they were not allowed across.

According to a correspondent outside the village, helicopter gunships dropped flares, but there appeared to be no sign of an attack to free the captives. An Interior Minister colonel from Dagestan, Abubakar Mogamedov, said: "They have blockaded Pervomayskiy and have taken more hostages there." He did not say how many had been seized.

In overnight negotiations, officials from the Dagestan administration struck a deal with the fighters similar to the one that was forged during the almost identical hostage crisis in the town of Budennovsk seven months ago. More than 2,000 captives were freed in return for the gunmen's safe passage after at least 13 civilians and seven policemen died.



The map shows the southern part of Russia with the Black Sea to the south. It highlights the regions of Chechnya, Dagestan, and Georgia, along with the city of Grozny. The map also includes parts of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey.

Patients tell of 24-hour terror

FROM PHILIPPA FLETCHER IN KIZLYAR

NURSES and volunteers carried patients moaning in fear and pain out of Kizlyar's hospital yesterday after Chechen gunmen abandoned it, leaving the body of a murdered policeman untouched on an upper floor.

Men carrying patients in iron beds jostled with Russian police carrying out mines laid by the gunmen on the lower floors of the grey four-storey building.

Torn sheets fluttered from broken windows and spent cartridges were scattered around on the road outside the hospital. Hot-water pipes punctured in 24 hours of gunfire spat water and steam into the chilly air.

The Chechen fighters, who had threatened to kill their captives unless Russia withdrew troops from their neighbouring separatist region, left unexpectedly in a convoy of buses early yesterday, accompanied by more than 160 hostages. The wounded were among those left behind.

Alla Pradikova, injured when Chechens forced their way into her flat, lay in the hospital entrance, her head peeping out from under an orange blanket. She said that she was at home when the rebels started banging on her door. "We asked them to let us get dressed, but they broke the

New spy chief chosen in Yeltsin shake-up

BY OUR FOREIGN STAFF

PRESIDENT YELTSIN appointed a new Foreign Intelligence Service head yesterday to succeed Yevgeny Primakov, now Foreign Minister, and gave a warning of more government changes to come. Colonel-General Vyacheslav Trubnikov, 51, a career intelligence officer, has served as Mr Primakov's first deputy since the former Soviet KGB split into several agencies shortly before the Soviet collapse in 1991.

"I have looked closely at him and realised he was a skilled professional, respected by intelligence operatives," Mr Yeltsin said.

Born into a worker's family in the Siberian city of Irkutsk, General Trubnikov joined the KGB in 1967 on graduation

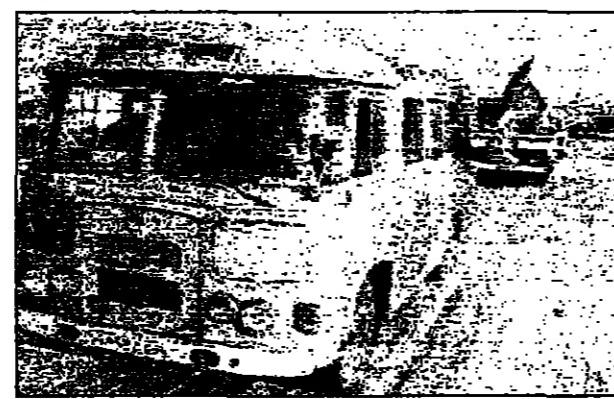
mittee, has called on the Government to resign.

Even if the drama ends successfully, the Government faces a security situation in which Chechen rebels have proved that they can strike at targets inside Russia at will. "Any peaceful town is defenceless against 100 armed terrorists," said Aleksandr Golts, a commentator for the military newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda*.

A former aide to the rebel Chechen leader, General Dzhokhar Dudayev, said that the Chechen forces had several "diversionary detachments" consisting of about 100 fighters, which were ready to carry out raids outside Chechnya. "This is only the beginning," he said.

General Dudayev told reporters in the Chechen hills that there could be "more large-scale incidents". He said that until Russia pulled its troops out of Chechnya, "the bloodshed will not end".

Ancient enemies, page 18



The convoy of buses heads for the Chechen border

in 24 hours of violence. The Chechens, smiling, wearing Islamic headbands and trailing green, white and red Chechen flags from the bus windows, took about 160 hostages from Kizlyar, including volunteers from local government and the hospital, as well as 30 women and 15 children. One woman in a headscarf and spectacles was shown on television sitting nervously next to a fighter with a rocket launcher between his knees.

President Yeltsin, who has been humiliated by the second mass hostage-taking in seven months, told reporters that the decision to let the gunmen leave had been "tactically correct". He held more talks with his security ministers, whom he lambasted for incompetence. He said that he was now considering several options.

"If they release the hostages there will be one turn of events. If they don't release them another scenario will unfold," he said at an introductions ceremony for Yevgeny Primakov, the new Foreign Minister. Mr Yeltsin later left for Paris to attend François Mitterrand's memorial service.

The release of most of the hostages eased the pressure on the Kremlin, which may be able to mount a military operation against the hostage-takers and try to save some face. Viktor Chernomyrdin,

the Prime Minister who negotiated the end to the Budennovsk siege, said yesterday that "banditry and all who take part in it will be punished".

But the political damage for the Yeltsin administration is considerable. A prominent Communist member of parliament, Viktor Ilyukhin, who is chairman of the security com-



A Kizlyar man weeps for his dead grandson yesterday as he passes the hospital that was commandoed by gunmen

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مكتبة الأصل

Defeated Walesa to work on image in £6,000-a-year shipyard job



Walesa, the "Great Electrician", plies his trade at the Gdansk shipyard in 1989

BY ROGER BOYES

LECH WALESZA, who was once dubbed the Great Electrician, kept up his old skills by fixing televisions and changing plugs during his five years in the presidential palace.

Now, still smarting from his defeat in the presidential elections, the former Solidarity hero says he plans to return to the Gdansk shipyards to work and restore his credentials as a rugged worker-politician.

Mr Walesa claims he has no choice: he needs a job. As a former head of state, he is not entitled to a pension, only to a team of bodyguards who will accompany him to the 6.30 morning shift.

His actual wealth is a mystery.

During the 1980s he picked up many

valuable human rights awards, including the 1983 Nobel Peace Prize, a substantial advance on his two volumes of autobiography, and a controversial \$1 million (£640,000) film option on his life story from Warner Brothers.

Some of the cash was given to good causes and some has been spent. More than half the film fee went towards buying a family house in Gdansk and flats for two of his wayward sons. The Polish taxman insists that he has not paid his due and most Poles reckon that he is still a wealthy man.

The truth is that he wants to replay history. The shipyards were the springboard for the 1980 Solidarity revolution that eventually broke the spine of communist rule in Poland.

Now, Mr Walesa seems to be saying, the communists are back and have to be opposed in a similar way.

Former communists dominate parliament and the Government. His successful rival, Aleksander Kwasniewski — now touring Germany and France — was a communist minister.

The return to the shipyards does

not represent a burning desire by Mr Walesa to repair electric houses. Nor is he desperately in need of the £500-a-month salary of a chief electrician.

Rather, the move marks the beginning of the next stage of his political career. It certainly means trouble for the likes of Józef Olek, the Prime Minister who, in the last days of Mr Walesa's presidency, was accused of passing secrets to the KGB. Yester-

day in the rundown yards (no longer named after Lenin), workers were taking bets on how long Mr Walesa would stay with them. He is not universally admired there. Younger workers in particular are less prone to the mythology of the plucky 1980s strike leader, and complain that he did little for them during his five years in power.

The yards, however, are important to Mr Walesa. He was an unhappy country boy until 1967 when, by joining the yards, he transformed himself into a proud worker.

But the corruption of the communist regime was mirrored in the yards — meat shortages, arbitrary price rises, poor safety standards and political sackings enraged the workforce — and eventually Mr Walesa

turned against communism. Dismissed from the yards, he had to climb over the fence to lead the 1980s strikes.

When General Wojciech Jaruzelski imposed military rule in 1981, Mr Walesa was jailed for a year. On his release he was offered his old job in the yards — to keep him out of trouble. He was put in the electrical workshop and in effect sealed off from the rest of the yard, watched closely by secret police. Even so, he managed to meet underground leaders — usually disguised in wigs and false whiskers — after work.

Life should be somewhat easier for the born again worker this time. This is perhaps just as well: he no longer has the physique for jumping over shipyard fences.

French troops seize rocket launcher used in tram attack

FROM STACY SULLIVAN IN SARAJEVO

THE rocket launcher thought to have been used in Tuesday's deadly attack on a crowded Sarajevo tram was confiscated yesterday by Nato forces.

French troops pinpointed the origin of the rocket and immediately returned fire after the attack with 20mm cannon rounds before surrounding a high-rise block of flats in Grbavica, a Serb-held pocket in the city. Although their initial search left them empty-handed, yesterday they discovered the launcher.

A joint Nato-UN investigation team then re-enacted the attack, hauling the shattered tram and its 30-year-old driver back to the scene on the city's infamous Sniper's Alley. The rocket attack, originally thought to have been a grenade, had killed one woman and injured at least six others.

Even the dead start to leave Serb Sarajevo

FROM SEAN MAGUIRE IN SARAJEVO

THE dead are rising in Sarajevo as Serbs take their loved ones away from Muslim rule.

In the Serb suburb of Ilidza, as the coffin of a soldier was pulled from his grave, an angry bystander said: "Don't take pictures! You wrote bad things about us during the war and now you want to look at our misery."

In three weeks' time, under the peace plan for Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Serb-held areas around Sarajevo are to be handed to the control of the Muslim-led Government. By mid-March the Muslim-led army will be authorised to enter the Serb suburbs.

Serb pleas to delay the transfer have fallen on deaf ears. Having fought for the

right to live separately, few relish government rule. Most say, reluctantly, that they have no choice but to leave their homes.

Until now few have had the courage for the macabre task of exhuming husbands, brothers or friends. But as the peace plan leaves grows near, desperation has prompted action.

"I did not even dream this would start to happen," Ivica, head gravedigger at the Ilidza exhumation, said. "But people say they cannot live without being able to come to the grave every Sunday to light a candle."

The dead soldier's sister wailed as Ivica jumped down into the grave and lifted her brother's remains into a new coffin. (Reuters)

The current United Nations mandate, which currently has 1,600 Russian and Belgian UN peacekeepers patrolling the area, expires on Monday and American diplomats are anxious that Croatia make no attempt to invade an area it wishes to recapture.

FOR half a century, Giuseppe Di Stefano has inhabited Suite 202 of Sicily's most historic hotel, leading a life that captures exquisitely the flavour of this island of silent oaths and secret societies. The mysterious baron never leaves his three-room suite at the Grand Hotel delle Palme. A barber comes every six weeks. Room service brings all his meals and a maid tidies up each day. An administrator pays his rent. The reception desk turns away all visitors. The 89-year-old Signor Di Stefano's only companion is a 24-hour nurse. This is the baron's existence as pieced together from those who know him. He lives under a Mafia-imposed exile, according to a story told by

hotel personnel. One day on the grounds of his vast estate in Castelverano, Signor Di Stefano came across a trespasser and killed him. The young man's father, a mafioso, threatened to kill the baron, who begged for an alternative permanent exile from the world.

"The myth of the baron is a mystery," said Enzo Caruso, the hotel manager. "Sicilians like mysteries. They like to think that a man can live in the shadows." Secrets represent knowledge, so the "more secrets he has the more important the man is." Signor Caruso explained, acknowledging that the publicity is not bad for the hotel, although its history is for itself.

Richard Wagner completed Parsifal here. Lucky Luciano, the Mafia boss, ate in its restaurant Raymond Rous-

opening of his trial on charges of associating with the Mafia.

Years ago the baron used to appear for four-hour lunches in the ornate dining room with a few friends, wearing silk shirts, a scarf and a white jacket. Toti Librizzi, the bartender for 30 years, remembers the baron's brown-and-white shoes. Signor Di Stefano was a man of "culture," Signor Librizzi said. In years past, the baron would go to the kitchen and direct the cook in preparing largely forgotten Sicilian cuisine.

These days he sees only a trusty handful of hotel staff. He used to listen to classical music, but the stereo seems to be gone. Now television news can be heard from outside the suite door, but no one answers a knock — protecting the reclusive Sicilian of

mysteries. (AP)

Leading article, page 19



Toti Librizzi outside the Palermo hotel where Giuseppe Di Stefano has lived in a three-room suite for 50 years

Mafia mystery of man in Suite 202

FROM DANIEL WAKIN
IN PALERMO



Wagner stayed in hotel
sel, the French writer, committed suicide in one of its rooms.

Last September Giulio Andreotti, seven times the Prime Minister, stayed one floor down from the reclusive of

Italy determined to ensure EMU train runs on time

FROM CHARLES BRENNER IN ROME

BRITISH hopes of Italian support for a delay in monetary union spring from wishful thinking, according to the officials who are running Rome's presidency of the European Union while the politicians squabble over the fate of the Government.

The top Foreign Ministry and Treasury officials insisted on their country's devotion to the Maastricht cause as Lamberto Dini, the Prime Minister, warned parliament that Italy's dignity in the eyes of Europe was at stake in the country's political stalemate.

Italy considers it inconceivable to think of extending the January 1993 deadline for European monetary union (EMU), even if it fails to make the grade when the EU picks the first members in early 1998. Boris Biancheri, the new chief of the Foreign Ministry, said: "If it does not join at the beginning, it will do so after a slight delay." Under Susanna Agnelli, the Foreign Minister, Signor Biancheri's team is preparing to push what many

voking Italy's six-month European Union presidency as a prime reason for avoiding the upheaval of new elections before the summer. After watching Spain gain credit with an impressive presidential stint, Italy's elite is worried that political chaos could lead to squander its spell in the Union spotlight and its chance to win back influence lost over the past couple of years.

Even if Signor Dini, a European enthusiast in the Italian tradition, stays on, there is concern in Brussels that he will be handicapped by the power vacuum. The return of a centre-right Government, however, would be worse in their view because it would probably take on the more Euro-sceptical colours of the last Berlusconi team.

Italy determined to keep the "EMU train" moving and hoped that it could show enough progress in bringing down its heavy national debt to convince its partners that it merits a berth in the single currency.



Agnelli: setting pace

Mitterrand illness hidden for decade

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

FRANCOIS MITTERAND knew he had prostate cancer from the start of his 14-year presidency but kept his illness secret for more than a decade, despite a promise to be completely "transparent" about his health, French newspapers reported yesterday.

The public was initially told the former President, who died on Monday aged 79, had cancer in September 1992 when he had the first of three operations. Records suggest the disease may have been diagnosed as early as spring 1981, before he was elected for his first seven-year term, but a formal diagnosis may only have been made at the end of that year, after he was installed in the Elysée Palace.

Mitterrand's decision to hide the facts reflects the thick veil of secrecy still surrounding many aspects of his life. By the time he "went public", he had been undergoing treatment to keep the cancer in check, including hormone therapy, for at least ten years, *Le Monde* reported. Robert

Mitterrand, 80, has claimed his brother could have been saved if he had received better treatment. But the former President's widow, Danielle, and the couple's two sons insisted yesterday the family had complete confidence in his medical team.

In a television interview on

Tuesday, Robert, who was also diagnosed as having prostate cancer, said he had advised his younger brother to see a foreign specialist, adding: "He could have been saved."

Today is a national day of mourning in France. Dozens of world leaders are expected at a memorial Mass this morning in Notre Dame cathedral, including the Prince of Wales, John Major and President Yeltsin. Mitterrand's funeral and burial at his birthplace of Jarnac, southwest France, will take place at the same time, attended only by family and close friends. Last night thousands went to La Bastille for a Socialist rally in his memory.

BOUTROS GHALI ACCUSES DEBTOR US

BY MICHAEL BINNION
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

THE United Nations Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros Ghali, yesterday accused America of a "certain dishonesty" over its accusations that his organisation was not doing its job properly.

He said in London that there were "those who, by denying funding, make the UN ineffective, then say that they are withholding funding because the UN is ineffective."

Addressing a meeting in Central Hall, Westminster, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the first session of the General Assembly, Dr Boutros Ghali said the UN's effectiveness was being "corroded from within" because it was being denied the means to do its job properly.

He did not single out America — by far the largest debtor in the UN — by name, but expressed his general exasperation with the refusal by Congress in the United States, as well as several other debtor countries, to pay their assessed contributions.

Dr Boutros Ghali said the UN was also weakened by its member states' inability to follow through on their decisions. There was a clear commitment from member states to provide the means to make such undertakings real. The failure to mobilise and use collective force effectively has caused grave setbacks in Somalia, in Rwanda and in the former Yugoslavia.

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White House officials doubt whether deal on balanced budget can ever be reached

Republicans try to keep 'revolution' on the move

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

Greek
close
rank
crisis

REPUBLICAN leaders were yesterday exploring radical new strategies to advance their "revolution" after the breakdown of their budget negotiations with President Clinton on Tuesday night.

Both sides publicly insisted the negotiations had been suspended, not ended, but privately officials said they had serious doubts whether an agreement on how to balance the budget in seven years was achievable. Wall Street shared those doubts and the Dow Jones index opened sharply lower after plunging 67 points on Tuesday.

Mr Clinton has spent 50 hours in direct talks with Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker, and Robert Dole, the Senate leader, over the past three weeks. Mr Dole said "fundamental differences" remained, and while both sides have made significant compromises neither can give much more without alienating its core supporters.

Mike McCurry, the White House spokesman, said: "The only thing now that is preventing us from getting a balanced budget agreement is Republican insistence that we have a

larger tax cut than the President deems necessary, paid for by Medicare savings that the President feels are unnecessary." A balanced budget is at the heart of the Republicans' drive to put America's economic affairs in order, shrink the federal government and devolve power to the states, but Mr Clinton argues that their plan would devastate health, education and environmental programmes and shred the social safety net.

Officially the negotiations have gone into recess for a week to take stock of the situation. Republicans say they will return to the bargaining table if and when Mr Clinton presents some new ideas, but in the meantime they are exploring alternative ways forward.

One is to woo conservative Democrats who agree with many parts of their balanced budget plan. It is doubtful whether the Republicans could win over enough to secure a veto-proof two-thirds majority in both houses, but the more Democrats they can persuade to defect the more pressure they will put on Mr Clinton.

Another possible strategy is for the Republicans to ac-



Newt Gingrich, left, and Dick Armey, the House majority leader, listen as Robert Dole struggles to hear a question at a news conference

knowledge that an agreement is unreachable, cobble together a stopgap budget for 1996 to keep the Government ticking over, and take their case to the people in November's congressional and presidential elections.

A Washington Post poll yesterday encouraged the President to stand firm. It gave him a 53 per cent approval rating and compared to 31 per

cent for the Republican Congress. By 57 per cent to 36 respondents said Mr Clinton's position on the budget was closer to theirs than the Republicans', and by 47 per cent to 32 they believed the President was trying harder than the Republicans to resolve the issue.

In bald numerical terms

Congress and the President have drawn much closer than

at the beginning of their talks, but the figures mask deeper ideological differences. For example the Republicans have trimmed their proposed tax cuts from \$245 billion over seven years to \$177 billion, and Mr Clinton is prepared to cut taxes by \$87 billion, but the two sides profoundly disagree on who the beneficiaries should be. The Republicans would now cut only \$233

billion from projected spending on the Medicare and Medicaid health insurance programmes for the elderly and poor, far less than they originally proposed, while Mr Clinton would cut \$183, but the President rejects deep structural changes in the programmes and the end of automatic entitlement to benefits. For good measure Mr Clinton vetoed on Tuesday

night a Republican Bill that would have comprehensively reformed the welfare system by giving the states block grants letting them fashion their own programmes, and limiting how long people can stay on welfare.

Mr Clinton said the Republican legislation would hurt children and offered too little help putting recipients back to work.

OJ Simpson explains his innocence in \$30 video

FROM GILES WHITTELL
IN LOS ANGELES

O.J. SIMPSON is ready to put his side of his acquittal, but only to those prepared to spend \$29.95 (£19.50) on his 2½-hour video.

In a staged interview, the former American football star and sports commentator hopes to demolish the notion that his whereabouts were a mystery for 90 minutes during which his former wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ronald Goldman, were murdered 18 months ago. In clips from the video obtained by an American television programme, he claims that the lights were on in his house throughout this time, but that they could not be seen by a limousine driver who came to pick him up and claimed that the whole property was in darkness.

The millions who followed Mr Simpson's year-long murder trial will find such arguments hard to take unless they are among those who rejoiced at his acquittal. Neither he nor his lawyers claimed during the trial that lights were on at his house on the night of June 12, 1994, nor did the defence offer a watertight alibi.

O.J. Simpson: The Video comes after mainstream news organisations rejected his terms for an interview. The video, which goes on sale this weekend, is also designed to raise money to fight his legal battle against the families of Brown Simpson and Goldman, who have filed wrongful-death claims against him.

First Lady faces fresh onslaught over 'lies'

BY MARTIN FLETCHER

WHITE House officials were struggling to develop a damage-control strategy yesterday as the attacks on Hillary Clinton's veracity continued.

Alfonse D'Amato, the Senate Whitewater committee chairman, was holding a press conference last night to spell out why he believes the First Lady concealed her involvement with the corrupted bank at the heart of the Whitewater affair, and her central role in the unwarranted 1993 dismissal of the seven-man White House travel office.

Senator D'Amato's committee will hear today sworn evidence from Richard Massey, one of Mrs Clinton's former Rose law firm colleagues, who is expected to undermine further her claims to have had minimal involvement with the bank. Madison Guaranty, The First Lady has said it was Mr Massey, not

Meinhardt, an ABC News poll indicates that 50 per cent of Americans no longer believe Mrs Clinton is telling the truth about Whitewater, and media criticism has spread to most mainstream newspapers. The Washington Post said: "The First Lady has some explaining to do". The New York Times bemoaned the Clintons' endless "obfuscations".

Striking back, the Clintons' lawyers are suddenly appearing on television shows to condemn the attacks as a partisan witch hunt.

The police have questioned employees, including John Horace, a nursing aide who left after being charged with assaulting a female resident.

Woman in coma made pregnant

FROM QUENTIN LETTS
IN NEW YORK

she, who secured Madison as a client and did most of Rose's work for her.

A memo written by one of Mrs Clinton's close friends during the 1992 campaign suggested that Mr Massey had agreed to go along with those statements, but he has allegedly now told investigators they are not true.

Meanwhile, an ABC News poll indicates that 50 per cent of Americans no longer believe Mrs Clinton is telling the truth about Whitewater,

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newspapers. The Washington Post said: "The First Lady has some explaining to do". The New York Times bemoaned the Clintons' endless "obfuscations".

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partisan witch hunt.

Afrikaners to plead for their rights at rally in Pretoria

FROM RAY KENNEDY
IN JOHANNESBURG

AFRIKANER rightwingers, who for months have been broadly quiet as South Africa's transition to democracy has developed, are to try to make their voices heard again at a mass rally against what they describe as infringements of their basic rights.

The rally, which is due to take place in Pretoria on Saturday, is being arranged by the Foundation for Equality Before the Law. The organisation was formed last November by, among others, General Johan Van Der Merwe, the police chief during the final years of apartheid.

The African National Congress has described it as an attempt to drag Afrikaners back "into the dark ages of apartheid" and the organisers as "a motley crew of ex-politicians and retired civil

society felt strongly about certain issues they should have the right to protest peacefully.

Little has been heard for months of the neo-Nazi Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB), but it is expected to make an effort on Saturday to regain some of its influence. Speakers from the Conservative Party, which boycotted the country's 1994 election, the Freedom Front and the National Party will address the rally.

The organisers also anticipate that there will be a large contingent of disgruntled former members of the defence force. They have urged people to turn up if they feel aggrieved by the prosecution of former senior security officials, such as General Magnus Malan, the former Defence Minister, affirmative action and the treatment by President Mandela's Government of the Afrikaans language.

servants who are unable to accept their loss of influence".

The National Party yesterday strongly denied an ANC claim that the protest had been initiated by its leader, F.W. de Klerk, the Second Deputy President. A spokesman said the ANC did not have the sole right to stage demonstrations and that if other sectors of

the opposition wanted to do so

they should be allowed to do so.

De Klerk: accused of initiating the protest

the protest would be a "massive waste of resources".

The protest is likely to draw a large crowd, with many Afrikaners expected to turn out to show their support for the movement.

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Dehydration also results in your feeling weak and tired and can lead to overeating as it disturbs appetite mechanisms so that you think you are hungry when you are not.

Yet few of us drink as much water as we need to remain in top form. On average, in a temperate climate, when not sweating from exertion or heat, we need about six pints a day for optimal health. Few of us consume as much as two. How thirsty you are is not a

LESLIE KENTON

Obsessed with growing older? You are in good company

WRITERS AND AGEING

THE DAYS of our years are three score years and ten, says the Psalmist. But the writer hopes to use that brief span in order to live for ever. Hence the thought of advancing age always creates a tension in the literary mind. Shakespeare's dark awareness that "Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth, and delves the parallels in beauty's brow" is suffused with the dim aurora of Wordsworth's "intimations of immortality".

Young writers can afford to ignore the process of ageing, and like Keats prefer to be "half in love with easel Death" — which sounds more romantic and is not yet real. They are in a hurry, and dread wasting glorious youth: "In headaches and in worry / Vaguely life leaks away," wrote the young Auden, and his sense of urgency is shared by most poets and novelists in their twenties.

The fact that some really do die young only reinforces the notion that death is preferable to decrepitude, and that ageing can somehow be put off for ever. Rupert Brooke praised the young soldiers who sacrificed on the battlefield "that unloved serene, / That men call age". John Lennon, the Sixties equivalent to the war poets, sang that "life is what happens to you when you're busy making other plans".

The assumption of the twentysomethings that nothing could be worse than old age is not necessarily shared by the aged themselves. Cicero thought serenity was not to be sneezed at, while Yeats mused on his Nobel Prize medal, which bore the image of a youth listening to a beautiful Muse: "I was good-looking once like that young man, but my Muse was full of infirmity, my Muse old as it were; and now I am old and rheumatic, and nothing to look at, but my Muse is young." Dr Johnson, though, was in no doubt that it was better to be young and frivolous: "If I had no duties, and no reference to futurity, I would spend my life driving briskly in a post-chaise with a pretty woman."

It is really only in their late thirties that most writers start to worry about the future. Perhaps the two greatest meditations on ageing in English, Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* and Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, were written not by old fogies but by men in the prime of life.

Some thirtysomethings take refuge in escapism: Housman dreams of his Shropshire lads "that will die in their glory and never be old", and Gray recalls that "the paths of glory lead but to the grave". When Byron wrote some verses on the eve of his 37th birthday, he struck a lachrymose note: "My days are in the yellow leaf; / The flowers and fruits of love are gone; / The worm, the canker, and the grief / Are mine alone!"

For Cyril Connolly, it was fatherhood that made him feel his age (he was only 35): "There is no more sombre



Rupert Brooke praised the young soldiers of Flanders

enemy of promise than the palm in the hall."

But it is also the onset of middle age which awakens an appreciation of maturity, and especially the attractiveness of the mature woman. Shakespeare wrote the noblest panegyric of all to her in *Antony and Cleopatra*: "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety." There is no better female part in all Shakespeare, yet Cleopatra is almost 40 by the time the play begins.

In stark contrast to the mauldin self-pity of men, though, are the calm reactions of the classical women writers to ageing. As Chesterton said, the novel of the 19th century was female, and the greatest female novelists did not begin until they were past the first flush of youth: Jane Austen and George Eliot. They both contemplate the onset of middle age with equanimity. While they acknowledge the crucial importance of age in any social situation, they treat it as a fact to be reckoned with rather than as a misfortune.

Growing older ought to teach writers, like anybody else, to appreciate their elders: "When I was a boy of 14 my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around," wrote Mark Twain. "But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much he had learned in seven years."

But, more than any other profession, writers have it in their power to keep spinning their grey hairs into gold. Shaw, who lived and wrote into his nineties, is supposed to have said of youth: "Far too good to waste on children."

DANIEL JOHNSON

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Page 38

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Wake up to water

We should drink six pints of water a day to stay in top form (most of us consume less than two). Water helps to eliminate waste, raises energy levels and improves the look of skin



All we need is the air that we breathe

BREATHING EXERCISES TO KEEP YOUNG

round, every day of your life. Few people breathe fully. Most of us, particularly in sedentary jobs, breathe high — that is, we breathe quickly and in a shallow way, concentrating the inhalations in the upper chest area which is the part of the lungs that holds the smallest quantity of air.

Not only does this kind of breathing inhibit oxygen intake, it can also encourage the lungs to atrophy and to lose their elasticity — a common occurrence as people get older.

Full breathing is also an important tool for encouraging waste elimination — a kind of spring-clearing process that can go on all year

Other people, who allow the air to flow deeper into their lungs, are mid-breathers. But to make the best use of oxygen for ageless ageing, it is important to develop the habit of taking total breaths so that they become a normal way of breathing.

In breathing totally, all of your breathing apparatus comes into play. The intercostal muscles expand the ribs outward to create a large space in which your lungs can inflate to their maximum. The

diaphragm moves down, pulling the lower ribs outward, which lets even the very bottom of your lungs fill completely with air.

Practise it lying down for five minutes a couple of times a day — perhaps on awakening or just before going to sleep — and gradually it will become an automatic way of breathing. Not only will this help with ageless ageing, it will also help to improve your resistance to fatigue and the glow of your skin. It will also

have some effect in protecting you from minor illness.

Here is the technique:

- Lying flat on your back with a small pillow beneath your neck, place one hand on your abdomen and rest the other on one side of your ribcage. Inhale slowly through your nose.

Imagining you are sending your breath to a place about two inches below your navel.

- As the in-breath continues, let it fill your stomach. Then expand your ribcage to the side, as well as the mid-section of your chest.

- Now let the fresh breath fill the upper part of your chest area. The whole process of inhalation should take about five seconds.

- Hold your breath for an

other five seconds to begin with, then gradually increase the time.

Then let the lower lungs deflate, followed by the upper chest. This process should also take no more than five seconds to complete.

- But note, it is important, before beginning the cycle again, to rest for a second or two.

□ Taken from *The New Ageless Ageing*: The Natural Way to Stay Young, by Leslie Kenton, published by Ebury Press, £7.99.

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Way to Stay Young, by Leslie Kenton, published by Vermilion, an imprint of Ebury Press, £7.99.

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HEALTH GUIDE

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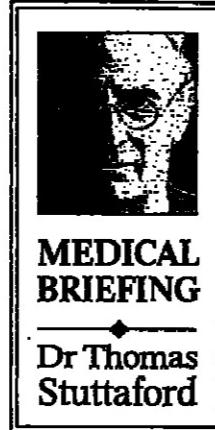
□ How doctors make certain that a patient is dead □ Improved steroid treatment for eczema □ The mystery of restless leg syndrome

THE CASE of Mrs Daphne Banks, who was found to be alive just as she was about to be slotted into one of the freezing compartments in the local mortuary, has unfortunately given credence to a common phobia. Many patients have the unnecessary fear that they might be buried alive, later to wake in their coffins only able to hammer in vain on the lid.

It is not unknown for patients to ask their doctors to make certain that they are dead by cutting their arteries before they are buried. I recently met somebody who had made just such a request more than 30 years ago. In his case the fear had been engendered in 1957 by wide publicity given to an incident in which a 78-year-old woman had been in her coffin for eight hours, but was only noticed to be alive as the pathologist was about to begin a post mortem.

The diagnosis of death is usually straightforward. The death is expected and the end follows a familiar pattern as life ebbs away. No pulse can be felt, the heart cannot be heard, the pupils of the eyes dilate and fail to react to light, and, if the surface of the eye is touched, there is no blink response. If there is any doubt, the doctor usually listens for the heartbeat for four or five minutes

Diagnoses of death



MEDICAL BRIEFING
◆
Dr Thomas Stuttaford

until convinced that it has stopped.

The days when a mirror or feather was held in front of the mouth are gone. The fear of making a mistake is not that the patient might Lazarus-like, arise from the dead in the graveyard, but that somebody who might have been resuscitated could be allowed to drift from unconsciousness to an unnecessary death.

I was called to a house once to see a young man who had been stung by a bee, had collapsed and apparently died. A retired nurse confirmed death. A mistake tends to be made in noisy surroundings where a heartbeat can be drowned by street noises, and the pulse may be hard to feel because of shock following blood loss. Intoxication with alcohol, and drug over dosage, may mimic death, particularly if the patient is started to mumble my con-

clusions the sheet moved. The patient had suffered transient renal failure, and made a full recovery.

Diagnosing death can be difficult. A former policeman told me that when he was in the force he was taught that he should only venture an opinion in the case of apparent death when the victim had been decapitated, otherwise it should be left to the doctor.

In casualty the resuscitation team set to work, the patient was attached to a mass of wires and tubes. Soon the aged, cynical but very experienced and competent surgeon who was in charge of the hospital's emergency services, came to see her. It was explained that she had been taken, as dead, to the mortuary but was now alive and in his care. He examined her carefully, gave his opinion that she would have suffered irretrievable brain damage, and switched off the machinery, which by now was keeping her alive, saying: "And now she is dead again."

also exposed to cold. Hypothermia from any cause, including near drowning, can be misleading as can unconsciousness after an electric shock.

Many years ago an elderly woman patient of mine was so obsessed about the cost of heating that she kept her home freezing cold. One winter's day I received a call from the ambulance controller to say she had been found dead on the floor of her cottage. It was too late to divert the ambulance to the casualty department, so I went to visit her in the mortuary, and noticed that she still had a heartbeat. It was a classic case of a patient, unconscious through hypothermia, being presumed dead.

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Skin creams up to scratch



THE Betnovate steroid creams and ointments have been an essential part of medical practice for nearly a generation. Last year

Glaxo introduced Cutivate cream which is, as it were, Betnovate mark two. This month the manufacturers have extended the range by releasing Cutivate ointment for treatment of dry, scaly eczema in which some moisturisation of the skin would be useful.

Cutivate does not have to be applied quite as often as Betnovate; only once a day if the cream is used, twice a day for the ointment. In general, creams are recommended in the treatment of weeping, moist skin conditions, and ointments for those lesions which are dry and scaly, or if the area is to be covered.

Cutivate is as potent as Betnovate but is less likely to cause any side-effects if it is absorbed. It is recommended for use in cases of eczema and dermatitis but, like Betnovate, should not be pre-

scribed for acne rosacea, peri-oral dermatitis or viral skin diseases such as shingles or herpes. Nor should it be used where bacterial or fungal infection is present or when the skin trouble is in an area prone to infection. Betnovate combined with an appropriate fungicide or antibiotic is available for treating those parts of the body that might harbour organisms.

Potent steroid creams should be applied for only a few days at a time to the face because the fine skin there may atrophy and develop skin lesions as unsightly as those the cream was designed to treat.

Shaken and then stirred



THE restless leg syndrome is one of the unsolved mysteries of medicine. A 425-page treatise, *Akathisia and Restless Legs* by Perminder Sachdev, recently published by Cambridge University Press contains no explanation for the syndrome when its origins are apparently spontaneous and not

an accepted side-effect of a drug. But some people do suffer such discomfort in their legs that they are unable to keep them still, and endure, together with their partner, restless and disturbed nights.

Their symptoms can occur at any time of the day but tend to arise after they go to bed and are normally of an aching nature, although some patients complain of burning sensations and irritation. Whatever the nature of the trouble, the resulting irresistible urge to move the legs inevitably causes insomnia, which the following day leads to tiredness, irritability and a poor work performance.

Some surveys have suggested that more than 10 per cent of the population demonstrate some degree of leg restlessness; it is slightly more common in women than men. Rheumatoid arthritis, excessive coffee drinking and pregnancy are all known to make the condition worse. It is claimed that various drugs, including the calcium antagonists such as Adalat (nifedipine) provide some relief.

Levodopa, the drug used to treat Parkinson's disease, is also prescribed by some doctors but its side-effects can be worse than the disease.

The cooking fat that bypasses the hips



Fat-free snacks: low-calorie chips may become a reality if Procter & Gamble get the go-ahead to sell Olestra

After 25 years of research, a food company believes it has found the perfect butter substitute, says Nigel Hawkes

A FAT that tastes like fat but doesn't leave its traces on the hips or on the heart sounds like a dream. But Procter & Gamble's Olestra, now nearing the market after a gestation of almost 25 years, raises mixed feelings among food scientists.

Unlike some fat substitutes that are based on carbohydrates or proteins, Olestra is a fat. That means its taste and "mouth-feel" are the same as a regular fat, but it carries zero calories, and is not absorbed by the body.

Normal dietary fats are mostly triglycerides — three fatty acids linked to glycerol. The molecule of Olestra is bigger, consisting of either six or eight fatty acids linked to a sugar molecule, and resists digestion by the enzymes in the stomach. That means that Olestra passes through unchanged, with no chance to clog the arteries.

Better still, says P&G, it can be used for deep-frying, producing potato crisps as good as traditional ones. Those who have tasted Olestra-fried crisps agree that they are good, though there is a slight aftertaste.

The effect of frying in Olestra is to reduce the calorie count of an ounce of crisps from 150 to 60. A slice of pie in Olestra pastry would come down from 405 calories to 250, while a helping of chocolate cake would go down from 230 calories to 160. This could help slimmers, but there are caveats. Wouldn't they simply satisfy a fat craving by eating other things?

Olestra's opponents in America, orchestrated by Ralph Nader's Centre for Science in the Public Interest (CSP), have focused attention below the belt. Because the molecules of Olestra move unchanged through the stomach, they can act as solvents, removing other nutrients from the body.

Vitamins A, D, E and K and beta-carotene are all fat-soluble, and trials have shown that they can be stripped from the body by eating Olestra. P&G says that it has solved this problem by adding extra vitamins to Olestra-based foods, saturating the molecule's appetite so that it no longer absorbs additional vitamins. But they have not done the same with carotenoids.

A second problem is that Olestra-based foods can cause laxative effects or even, in the killer phrase latched on to by CSP, "anal leakage". This has been cured for almost all consumers by tinkering with the molecular structure to make the product more viscous. But how many people will be willing to take even the smallest chance of embarrassing accidents?

At the hearings before the US Food and Drug Administration, CSP's executive director, Michael Jacobson, painted a grisly picture of a young athlete subjected to taunts in the locker-room as a result of stains on his boxer shorts. This is not especially tasty stuff, but when Mr Nader's raiders identify an issue, they fight dirty — in this case, literally.

There have been plenty of arguments before about food constituents,

but this one is different in at least one respect. While additives, colourants or antioxidants are present only in small amounts, fat is a macronutrient, making up a substantial proportion of the food. The classic example of such a major dietary change was the introduction of margarines to replace butter earlier this century.

Some nutritionists now wonder if the trans-fats in margarines did not do as much harm as the saturated fats in butter they replaced. One of them is Walter Willett, professor of nutrition at Harvard School of Public Health, who now opposes Olestra. What will happen to consumers who eat it daily for years, he asks? He has described it as "appealing" to propose giving a food to children on the basis of tests largely carried out on pigs.

One unanswered question is whether eating foods made with Olestra will

reduce fat and calorie intakes, or simply encourage people to eat more to make up for what they are missing. According to Dr David Mela of the Institute of Food Research at Reading, relatively few studies have addressed the problem. He suspects that as far as calories are concerned, people will compensate by eating more, and the same may also be true of fat.

The artificial sweetener NutraSweet was supposed to reduce obesity by cutting calories. But people who use it also eat something else to compensate: obesity rates have since increased.

Fat-substituted foods probably should not be relied upon to produce spontaneous improvements in fat intake, body-weight management or obesity," concludes Dr Mela. "But they might help some individuals as part of an overall, willful effort to control diet."

It is now up to the FDA commission-

er, David Kessler, to rule on P&G's application to use Olestra in snacks and crisps. He will decide, not on the basis of whether Olestra makes nutritional sense, but whether it is safe. As American law stands, he will probably have little choice but to give it clearance in the limited market for which the application has been made.

In Britain, P&G applied for permission for the same application to the Ministry of Agriculture's Food Advisory Committee in 1987, and is still waiting for an answer. From time to time the FAC seeks clarification on various points, and P&G supplies it — but if and when Olestra will be approved is anyone's guess.

The irony is that Olestra is opposed by the very people who have campaigned for years to reduce saturated fat in foods. To their critics, whatever the food companies do is wrong.

In the beliefs of their time and depended on creating their own sense of drama. We could never go back to that. Nevertheless, she wonders whether there is a great deal of difference between some of the ancient objects regarded as having mystic healing qualities, and the way a sick child today can be encouraged towards recovery by clutching a sporting hero's football scarf, or listening to a favourite tape.

"Of course, modern medicine knows far more about physiology than the ancient healers did," she says, "but they found ways round it. There wasn't a lot they could do about heart disease, for instance, so they treated the symptoms, like dropsy, or chest pains. An inner sickness, they reasoned, might be healed by a lotion or a poultice.

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Psychology played a big part in convincing patients that they could be cured, so pagan incantations, the powers of a particular healer, and an instinctive belief in ritual were important elements in the healing process — not perhaps, so very different from

Ms Beith in Mull that she also discovered the healing properties of the spider's web. "I had caught my finger on the snub of a gate," she says, "and the bleeding wouldn't stop. I went into a tyre draped with cobwebs, drew my hand across a spider's web, and the bleeding stopped."

She also thinks that there might be something in the old belief that swallowing a large garden spider gives relief in the aftermath of a stroke. "The main damage is caused by the body overproducing glutamates," she says. "Spider venom counteracts this. It has certain properties that stop spasms. It has to be live, because then it goes down the throat spitting venom. A friend from Shetland told me that up there they cover the spider with butter first. It makes it easier to swallow."

Perhaps, once again, Shakespeare knew something about this. In Richard III, Queen Margaret, Henry VI's widow, asks Elizabeth: "Why strew'st thou sugar on that bottled spider?"

Healing Threads by Mary Beith is published by Polygon (£9.99).

Take two spiders and call me in the morning

Magnus
Linklater on
ancient
Highland
remedies

way," she says. "A lot of the early Gaelic manuscripts show that doctors were listening to their patients rather than just dictating to them. They had a concept of illness which was different from ours. The Gaelic for 'I'm sick' is 'I have a sickness on me'. By this definition, the pain doesn't belong to the patient, and it can be made to go away." How a patient was suffering seems to have been more important than finding a clinical definition of the illness.

Mary Beith, a writer and journalist who lives in Sutherland in the north of Scotland, has spent the past ten years collecting traditional medicines of the Highlands and Islands. She has found a surprising number used within living memory, and some with remarkable healing properties, which, she believes, merit scientific analysis rather than simply being written off as "old wives' tales".

She has not sampled a newt's eye, but she has found prescriptions involving adder's heads, frog's skins, dogs' saliva, and, if not an owl's wing, then certainly a gannet's chick or the oil of a fulmar. Once, nursing a cut finger, she drew it across a spider's web and found the bleeding miraculously stopped; going to bed with a boiled onion in each armpit did little for her personal hygiene, but it cured a nasty bout of bronchial asthma overnight, and though she has not yet plucked up the courage to swallow a large garden spider, she is in no doubt that it has properties which can help to limit the effects of a stroke.

"I don't think I would advise people to try all of these cures at home, but I have no doubt that a lot of the old remedies deserve a proper reappraisal," she says. The adder's fork and the blind-worm's sting from *Macbeth* are common sense antidiotics to snakes; a frog, sliced in two, was said to cure dropsy; the gannet and the fulmar were so useful to the Hebrideans that they were described as "flying medicine chests".

Ms Beith's book, *Healing Threads*, traces the origins of folk tales and superstitions, and finds a logical explanation behind many. She is convinced that the Gaelic healers in particular drew on a body of medical knowledge which has never been properly collated, and she has found fascinating clinical observations by early travellers which show that what might seem plain superstition to us, was often founded on sound medical practice.

"To understand and do justice to their approach to medicine, we must meet them half

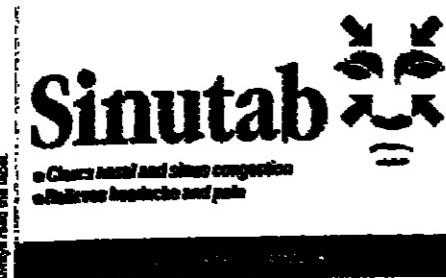


Mary Beith: testing ancient cures



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Darling baba, all love Larry

The ink is fading on the scrap of paper, the handwriting almost illegible. "My darling," it reads. "Here's your thesaurus (sic). You see I was listening all those times you mentioned it. Happy, happy birthday."

Vivien Leigh scribbled this to her husband Laurence Olivier, on one unspecified birthday. It is a poignant fragment from the happy moments in a marriage that was soon to descend into madness and tragedy.

It was a trivial note, but Lord Olivier could not bear to throw it away. A compulsively organised man, he kept everything from steamboat tickets to love letters. In the loft of his home in Steyning, West Sussex, dozens of suitcases are bulging with yellowing missives and neatly-kept engagement diaries, full of entries such as: 22 July 1951: lunch: Judy Garland and daughter. Orson Welles, Peter Finch, Ralph Richardson, Humphrey Bogart.

In a nearby barn, in crates crawling with silverfish, there are letters from such luminaries as David Niven, Douglas Fairbanks Jr., Peggy Ashcroft, Richard Attenborough, Noel Coward and Christopher Fry.

Olivier's letters to his friends began either "Darling baba" or "Darling boyie". He signed them "all love, Larry".

The task of piecing these documents together has gone to Derek Granger, a former theatre critic and the producer of the television adaptation of *Brideshead Revisited*, in which Olivier played his swansong role as Lord Marchmain.

Granger was a close friend of the actor and now the Olivier family, who have been stung by the allegations in Donald Spoto's unauthorised biography, has chosen him to write the first official biography, which is expected to be published at the end of next year.

"I must say, I do sometimes feel a frisson of guilt when I am reading Larry's private correspondence," says Granger. "I am not sure I would like him to read mine."

Granger is sitting on the floor of Olivier's bedroom. His lordship's widow, Joan Plowright, is in Tenerife; his daughter Tamsin is downstairs in the kitchen. Picture windows look out on to the large hut housing the swimming pool, the tennis courts and the garden surrounded by thick hedges. He is very keen on topiaries and had a rather disastrous attempt at "using Chekhov's Three Sisters," says Granger.

This was a typical piece of behaviour from a man who wanted to be the best at everything. "I have never known anyone who had such an extraordinary aptitude for work," says Granger. "He always made one feel hopeless — as if one didn't do enough."

Granger was a schoolboy in 1937 when he saw Olivier perform his legendary Hamlet. They became friends in the 1950s. "From a very early age, Larry wanted to be in control. When he founded the National Theatre, he was absolutely the leader of the company. He even took it upon himself to organise the stage-door man's leaving party; we have the letters he

For the first time, Lord Olivier's biographer reveals the private letters of a theatrical genius, by Julia Llewellyn Smith



Olivier as Lord Marchmain

sent to every member of the company.

"He was not only a director there, but also an actor and also the manager. If you look at his diaries you see he spent the day organising schedules and talking budgets and then, at 7pm, getting into makeup and getting onto the stage."

"But during the day he would always find time to do some exercise, have a meal and a nap. He dreaded playing Othello because it was so exhausting. He loved drinking, especially his whisky, but he always gave up when he was training for a part. We have a touching letter to Anthony Quayle saying he has foreseen all earthly pleasures for the duration of a season at the National."

He never let up. On one day in 1955, he wrapped the filming of *Richard III* and went straight to Stratford to play Malvolio, Titus Andronicus and Macbeth. The next morning he got up to go to a local cinema to inspect the rushes."

This energy and conscientiousness were Olivier's greatest gifts. They could also be his worst flaw. He was as territorial as a tiger," says Granger. "Once when I was working with him at Granada, he became more and more icily indifferent towards me. I couldn't understand why until someone said: 'He's jealous of you because you know the whole business of studios and scheduling. He can't understand why people were coming to you and not to him.'

"In old age he would get terribly fretful if he wasn't the centre of attention. He would sit with his family and demand: 'What are they talking about at the end of the table?' But how can you be the greatest actor in the world and not want attention?"

Olivier had total belief in himself and was intolerant of criticism or interference. "After he had seen the first cut of *Brideshead*, he invited me to dinner and blasted me because we had cut 30 seconds from his deathbed speech. We thought he would never notice. He bellowed: 'I only took the role because of that speech!' By the end of dinner, I had rung Granada and begged them to reinstate those lines. It cost a fortune to put them back, but in retrospect I realised he was right."

"He was also cross because he decided that John Gielgud had a better part as Mr Ryder. 'You have given Johnny the best part,' he complained. We said: 'But only you could play Lord Marchmain, because he was so glamorous.'"

Fools were not suffered gladly: "We have one letter from a member of the National complaining that Larry had hit him in the shoulder-blades, while they were standing in the wings and said 'Go out there and get more laughs! I was practically sick on the stage,' he writes." Another letter from Olivier berates the Rank organisation, who prudishly wanted to cut the "blasphemous" "Cry God for Harry" from *Henry V*. "Larry soon put paid to that idea," chuckles Granger.

Yet this tyranny was laced with an extraordinarily sweet nature. "He was enormously aggressive in the pursuit of his career, and yet so thoughtful in other ways. All the birthdays of his family are listed in his diary and every single cricket match and event of his children."

"He was a clergyman's son, ingrained from childhood with a sense of duty. Financially, he took care of his stepmother and siblings."

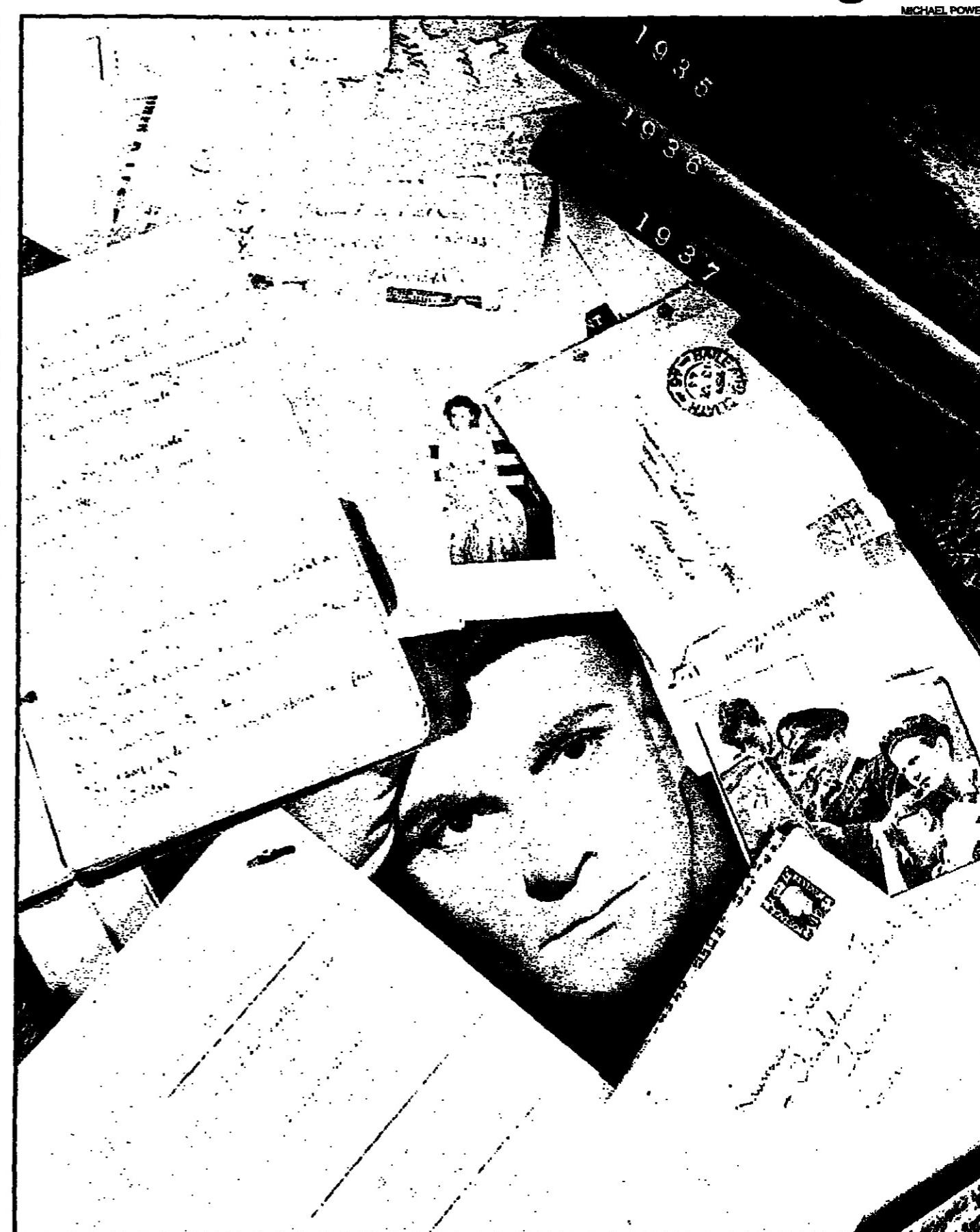
Olivier replied patiently to every fan letter. "We have letters to schoolboys telling them how to play Macbeth and another letter to a training college in Staffordshire, which wanted advice on putting on *Hamlet*. He advises performing it in its entirety and says: 'It's simply a play about a man who cannot make up his mind. Don't worry too much about why he can't, he just can't and you must feel that he can't.' He then apologises for not being able to lend any of the National's props."

In another letter to his third wife, Joan Plowright, he writes: "You have an absolutely marvellously uncalculated impish humour which is laced with an aptitude for self mockery. This last can be an invaluable but also a dangerous quality, which should be used preciously. The first is priceless but must not always be relied upon because it will not always get you out of a hole... Acting is basically a humourless task and that's what makes people like us suffer so."

"Your back is straight and beautiful," he writes in the same letter. "Christ, those corsets in this weather."

"I hope these letters will scotch

Olivier's reputation as a bit of an



The face of the young Olivier stares from a collection of his memorabilia, including letters from his father and Vivien Leigh

intellectual dumbo," says Granger. "There is a marvellous urgency and cogency to them, which many writers might envy."

Granger also hopes that the letters will show that Olivier, while a megalomaniac, was still keen to encourage his contemporaries' talents. "He was always writing to Gielgud, Scofield and Redgrave, offering them top roles. He would

never play Falstaff or Cyrano

because he felt they were best done by Richardson." And he could laugh at himself. "I remember him in the swimming pool when he was withered and ill and he flung his arms in the air and cried 'Look at the sex symbol of the western world!'

Granger can throw less light on Olivier's love life, knowing nothing about the affair claimed by Sarah Miles. Of his relationship with

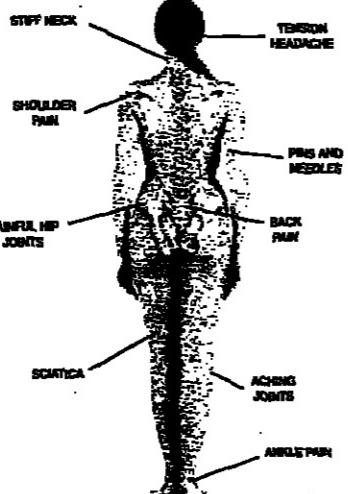
Leigh, he says: "It was a very traumatic and draining time. I think if he had not met Joan and fallen in love again, he couldn't have founded the National. Had he stayed married to Vivien, he would have had a very diminished career."

Instead, Olivier went on to forge an even more dazzling career. "There never will be another one like him," says Granger. "Not only

because he was such a great actor, but because he was born at the end of an extraordinary tradition where leading actors were expected to play all the great classical parts. Sure, there are the Tony Hopkins, the Branaghs, but they disappear to Hollywood. There will never be a period when commercial theatres can also afford to put on Shakespeare and attract such dazzling names."

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1121



1121

No longer a man's world



Joanne Pitman invades the male-only inner sanctum of the Oxford and Cambridge University Club

I seems that the old fashioned gents of the Oxford and Cambridge University Club are now attached to tradition only by their finger-tips. Uncivilised opposition to the idea of allowing "lady associate" members to become full members has dwindled to an embattled gang of 324 out of a full male membership of some 3,000 (the 500 ladies do not, of course, have a vote). But a ballot expected this month is almost certain to bring victory to the pro-change faction, allowing women entry to the inner sanctums of the club for the first time.

The mystery is that the antis have managed to fend off change for so long. A club ballot in 1993 showed a 3-1 majority in favour of equal rights, but it was rendered void because the turnout was just short of the required 50 per cent. Sixty-nine college heads have since resigned, along with scores of others, and membership is dropping.

But now that admission rules can be changed by a straight two-thirds majority, the club should be able to sneak into the 20th century just in time.

The stalwarts still opposed to change should not be surprised that they are referred to in the hushed tones of bemused curiosity reserved for endangered animals. Their blustering defence concerns issues of impertinence, disgraceful intrusion and various constitutional verities, and is

accompanied by remarks such as "I want to drink in peace. I don't wish to be surrounded by headmistresses and female dons. I do wish women did not try to run everything. They should restrict that to their families and homes."

The most stubborn and uncobbable may end up resigning. But some have already softened their stance. "The winds of change are blowing and we're going to have to think again," Sir Peter Crill says. "There may be a condition that there are two rooms set aside for members to retreat to — a men's bar and a ladies drawing room."

Eraded by a graceful Pall Mall facade, the club envelopes the visitor with a cherished sense of Establishment. There are formal reception rooms, lofty ceilings hung with chandeliers, the odd hunting trophy and a selection of colonel-types gathered happily around fireplaces with their mens murmuring "quaint" at each other over postprandial coffees.

But ladies are steered firmly away from the marble staircase which sweeps up from the

reception under yards of Tory blue carpeting. It is said that they are only allowed up as far as the pemium staircase, for to go further would take them to the second-floor male sanctum, the home of the club's library and smoking room.

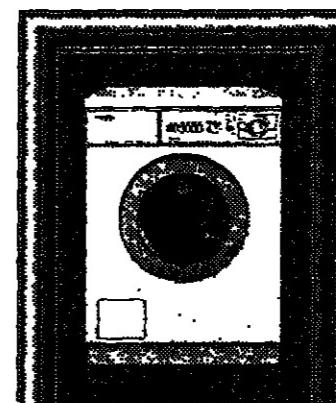
Could it be that the 324 antis believe that women would damage or infect the books?

Are they worried about the oestrogen count or the decaying action of sweaty fingers (an old Japanese excuse for preventing women from becoming sushi makers)?

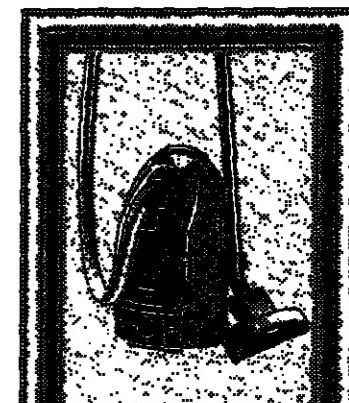
Rising life and limb, and having already witnessed two men trespassing unaccompanied in the ladies drawing room, I stepped out of the ladies lift and invaded the library by a few feet, braced for a volcanic run-in, or at the very least a couple of stick pokings and a squirt from a fountain pen.

Three young gents were sitting reading, wearing permafrost expressions and Savile Row-ish suits, while a squire in noisy tweeds was browsing the shelves. My arrival elicited a couple of harrumphs and one stern gaze over a pair of half-moon spectacles. Then an elderly fellow shuffled forward. We exchanged tense salutations until he finally confessed, with great delicacy, that I was trespassing. He said he took a dim view of this insanity but remained to avail himself of the facilities and, most importantly, to facilitate swift improvement. May he succeed.

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INSIDE SECTION
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All change at Piccadilly:
the Royal Academy reveals
bold plans for expansion
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مكتبة
الصلوة



RED WATER

Major begins to dust down his soapbox

In the dim light of damp January, the topography of the electoral battleground has fast emerged, with enterprise and welfare as its landmarks. John Major now believes he has the enemy's measure. His central line of attack will be that, however far the policy of Tony Blair's "stakeholder" society is from being fleshed out, the idea itself is enough to open "red water" between the two parties. Mr Blair's vision, he says, goes far beyond giving free market capitalism a human face. It contains at its core an interventionist philosophy that stands in distinctive opposition to Tory beliefs in individual choice and Tory attitudes to the proper relationship between government and business.

At a breakfast for businessmen at the Hyde Park Hotel yesterday, Mr Major indicated the positions from which he plans to order out his formations. There was the expected listing of Tory achievements — inflation "under more secure lock and key than we have known in my political lifetime", falling unemployment and the boast that more of the adult population are now in work than in Germany. He held out the prospect that this year will see a real revival in disposable incomes and almost pleaded with his audience to act on his passionate conviction that the recession is squarely over.

There was the equally to be expected don't-let-Labour-ruin-it theme, as he presented Mr Blair's putative cabinet as a gallery of rogues, untrustworthy on inflation and soft on crime, the trade unions and defence of British interests in Europe. A vote for Labour would be playing "Russian roulette with all the barrels loaded".

Mr Blair's stakeholder speech, he argued, exposed "the tip of a plan" to impose new burdens on business which could not be benign in their impact, however skilfully they were packaged for sale. He gave one overriding reason that they would make it more expensive to hire people. On companies, rather than the Exchequer, would fall the costs of Labour plans for corporate training levies, a minimum wage and,

potentially, an unstoppable string of direct debits arising from Labour's commitment to end Britain's opt-out from the European social chapter.

In his speech last November to the Confederation of British Industry, the Labour leader went to great lengths to persuade his audience that ending the opt-out contained no risk that "inefficient practices" would be imported to Britain from the Continent. Although he notably failed to explain just how this was to be done, since much social chapter legislation is decided by qualified majority voting, Britain could, he said, avoid being bound by directives it disagreed with. Many businessmen have since been further lulled into the belief that there is little more to the social chapter than is contained in good corporate practice.

Yesterday Mr Major argued, correctly, that this is a dangerous illusion. Business, he said, should look not just at what is in the social chapter now, but at what it could contain in future. The aim of Britain's European partners was to incorporate their domestic social legislation into the social chapter, with the express aim of eliminating the competitive advantages of lower-cost countries — such as this one. Without the opt-out, labour costs would inescapably rise in Britain, where the non-wage element of the payroll is 18 per cent, compared with 32 per cent in Germany and over 40 per cent in France and Italy. Because the losers would be people not in work, this was not just economically wrong; it would be "plain immoral".

Mr Major is staking his chances on an intuition that between now and the next election, voters will see and recoil from the regulatory fist inside Labour's velvet glove. These are good, but difficult, arguments. Tory politicians are not the most trusted arguers in this regard. They will not easily triumph over the image of social cohesion and common effort that Mr Blair summons with such ease. Mr Major knows it. The Hyde Park Hotel is not Hyde Park; but there was at least a metaphorical soapbox in evidence yesterday morning.

ALL GREEK

Andreas Papandreou returns to play another set

The political drama now being played in Athens could be defined by using none but English words borrowed from Greek: the hysteria surrounding the illness of Andreas Papandreou shows only the Prime Minister's mania for control, his paranoia and hubris, the charisma he still projects over his nation and the catharsis his political opponents are attempting to bring about with a parliamentary motion of no-confidence. The long-term outcome remains an enigma.

In itself the news that Mr Papandreou is recovering after lying ill for so long is, of course, welcome. The man who has dominated Greek politics for a generation was said yesterday to have taken a few steps in his private ward. Less welcome was the news that his wife Mimi, with virtually sole access to the stricken politician, used this fact to insist that he had no intention of stepping down. Her unspoken threat is that he will soon recover sufficient strength to deal with those turbulent lieutenants who have had the temerity to call for his resignation.

The prospect of the avenging leader returning to full power is extremely unlikely. But it has been enough to cover senior Pasok officials and paint any moves within the party for a leadership contest as treason. Indeed, Mr Papandreou's spokesman recently suggested that any move to replace the Prime Minister would be unconstitutional. He was, unfortunately, right: under Greek law the Prime Minister can be replaced only if he is "not present" — a bizarre

definition that covers both his death and his resignation. The two leading contenders for his job have thus attempted to stir a party revolt that would make him resign.

Costas Simitis, a leading internationalist in the reforming wing of the party, and Gerassimos Arsenis, the Defence Minister, both recognise the damage the power vacuum is causing. They have already cast caution aside and called for his resignation. But they may not sway their colleagues. Although even senior ministers such as Karolos Papoulias, the Foreign Minister, acknowledge that Greece is drifting, they fear to take a step that the Greek public, sentimentally attached to a man who triumphed over political scandal, marital discord and physical illness, might see as opportunist ingratitude.

They may also fail because of the attempt by the opposition New Democracy to force the issue with a parliamentary vote. The result has been to unite Pasok. But in the final act, it may well turn out that Mr Papandreou, the founder of Pasok, destroys, unwittingly, the political vehicle he created. It appears that no one has dared tell him the real state of the party and country. His wife, still with delusions of political influence, has blocked any suggestion of resignation. Only his son George, a junior education minister, has promised to speak to his father frankly. He should advise him to resign forthwith. Mr Papandreou, in health, damaged his country's standing; in sickness he should not be permitted to damage it further.

AGELESS THROUGH THE AGES

How we may laugh at Adam's ancient curse

Old age is man's common enemy — and woman's too. But, because we are living longer and feel increasingly vulnerable to the pains, expense, loneliness and fears of growing old, age is our contemporary bugaboo. The battle against ageing is for us what survival was for our rude forefathers, justification for our puritan grandfathers, and respectability and inheritance for our ambitious fathers. That is why *The Times* exploration of ageless ageing this week has hit so many funny-bones so sharply.

Some people have told us that they felt guilty about being so interested in what our *Times* doctor, Thomas Stuttaford, and our other writers have written on this subject. Take heart. These hopes and fears have been here before, not perhaps in quite the same way but with us nonetheless. From Rembrandt's self-portraits to all sorts of literature ancient and modern, ageless ageing is an archetype.

The traditional tragedy of age is not that one is old but that one is still young in a decaying body. Growing up is recognising that one's parents may be as young and silly as oneself — allowing, of course, for their age. From the ancient patriarchs and the American billionaire who is today funding research to make him live for ever, men have fussed about growing old.

By taking constant vitamin C, Linus Pauling survived to 93. From Dr Stuttaford's prescriptions of hormone replacement therapy to the buttery diet of our Science Editor, there are many roads to mitigating age. The topic has exercised poets from the author of

Ecclesiastes, "when the grinders cease from grinding", to Shakespeare, whose sonnets are obsessed with the subject. "Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang" may be the most beautiful line in poetry. But it also describes the ageing process in man, who arranges hairs across his bald patch to pretend this is not happening to him.

As usual, sex rests its head in such elderly introspection. Therapists such as Alan Coren have their potent panaceas. King Solomon and King David led merry, merry lives, with very many concubines, and very many wives — until old age came creeping, with very many quahns. Then Solomon wrote the *Proverbs*, and David wrote the *Psalms*. For our cult of youth is not a modern curse. Someone asked Sophocles in extreme old age how he felt about sex. The first tragedian to understand women replied: "Shut up, dear boy. I am delighted to be rid of all that, as though I had escaped from a mad and savage master."

In our own world of ageless ageing, anyone over 90 is the outpost sentry. And the young folks of 60 feel that the enemy must creep by him before he can come near their camp. Obituaries replace births and marriages as the most popular sections in newspapers for those for whom the years are slipping by. Postumus, Postumus. They gratify the competitive spirit. Those who keep their eyes looking out at the world and their minds busy stay younger than those putting on masks of cosmetic surgery. We might as well enjoy old age. It is generally better than the alternative.

Yours faithfully,
NORMAN MYERS
(Consultant in Environment and Development),
Green College, Oxford.
January 1.

Home-grown produce

From Mr Ian Merton

Sir, Your report of January 5, "Supermarkets damage British fruit growers", fails to recognise Sainsbury's strenuous efforts to ensure a greater outlet for British produce in our supermarkets.

Over 500 British growers, large and small, have joined our Partnership in Produce scheme, which gives them a year-round market for their produce and helps them to extend their seasons, develop new markets and find new varieties of produce.

Yours faithfully,
IAN MERTON
(Director of Produce Buying),
Sainsbury plc,
Stamford House,
Stamford Street, SE1.
January 5.

Elephants in trouble

From Dr Norman Myers

Sir, You report (December 29) that a British medical team is to travel to the Kiev Zoo to help an elephant with toothache, a mission for which contributors have supplied £9,500. Would that the contributors could supply similar funds to support elephant researchers in Africa, who sometimes can hardly afford to fill the petrol tanks of their field vehicles. Admirable as it is to assist an individual elephant, it is still more admirable to help an entire species.

Yours faithfully,
NORMAN MYERS
(Consultant in Environment and Development),
Green College, Oxford.
January 1.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Doubts on method of BBC selection

From Sir Paul Fox

Sir, Once again, the appointment of a new Chairman of the BBC has been made by the Prime Minister of the day (reports, January 10). As the new Charter of the BBC is about to be endorsed by Parliament, it is time to change this anachronism.

I suggest that a committee of senior Privy Councillors should be empowered to see a list of suitable candidates and in this way ensure that the choice is not left entirely to the government of the day.

Sir Christopher Bland has many qualities to commend him as the new Chairman of the BBC, but I think it would have been more reassuring to all licence payers had his appointment been made by a small group representing all parties.

Yours sincerely,

PAUL FOX
(Managing Director,
BBC Television 1989-91),
Garrick Club,
15 Garrick Street, WC2.

Courts-martial defects

From Mr John Mackenzie

Sir, I am the solicitor with the conduct of ex-Lance Sergeant Alexander Findlay's application to the European Court of Human Rights (report, December 19; letters, December 28, January 3). I also have the conduct of a number of other applications arising from Army and Royal Navy courts martial.

I constantly hear the claim that the courts-martial system is fair. I also hear the contrary claim. These claims are highly subjective. The case law of the European court has laid down objective standards for a court to comply with the Convention on Human Rights. They seem entirely opposite. The British courts-martial system fails to comply with them.

The most important requirement under Article 6(1) of the convention is that a court should be seen to be wholly independent of the parties. In all three Services a court martial is an *ad hoc* tribunal set up by a "convening officer" who both appoints its members and is the prosecuting authority.

In a Royal Navy court martial the prosecuting arm even appoints the defence advocate, although some independent-minded defendants reject this representation and apply for legal aid for civilian representation. The applicant for legal aid is to the convening officer.

This fundamental objection to the system hides a multitude of further breaches, none of which are addressed by the current Armed Forces Bill. To do so the Bill would need to provide for a new structure of courts, with dedicated trained staff independent of the Services — clearly an absurdity.

The answer is simple and cheap. Most serious courts martial concern breaches of the civilian criminal code. Pass these cases to the Crown Courts and retain a system of low-level disciplinary tribunals for purely military offences.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN MACKENZIE,
90a The Broadway,
Southall, Middlesex.
January 4.

Realities of a 'stakeholder' economy

From Mr Edgar Parnell

Sir, Peter Riddell ("Why Blair needs more time", January 8) asserts that a Blair-led government could come too soon. Surely the country cannot afford to wait for a genuine "stakeholder economy" (report, January 9) as now advocated by Blair.

Irrespective of which political party is in power, one of the greatest priorities has to be the elimination of adversarial relationships between the various "stakeholders" in our society and the achievement of a common purpose amongst diverse interest groups.

Economic activity is not to be left solely to investors. Businesses are needed to serve the needs of other stakeholder groups — consumers, the workforce, producers, or a specific community. Self-help will have to be given much more encouragement, especially now that both state and municipal forms of enterprise have been widely abandoned.

Irrespective of the ownership structure, all enterprises and the Government will have to achieve a much fairer balance in the allocation of benefits between the stakeholders involved.

Yours faithfully,

E. PARNELL
(Director),
Plunkett Foundation,
23 Hanborough Business Park,
Long Hanborough, Oxford.
January 9.

Sir, In your main political articles today William Rees-Mogg ("Tactics aren't enough to run the country") tells us that John Major is no good and advises him to say "goodbye". Peter Riddell ("Why Blair needs more time") tells us that Tony Blair is not ready to govern.

Could this be the beginning of a campaign to support Paddy Ashdown?

Yours faithfully,
VICTOR BLACK,
Lower Farm House,
Coln Rogers,
Gloucestershire.
January 8.

To catch and cure the drink-driver

From the Chair of the
Penal Affairs Consortium

Sir, You report today strong criticism of the Court of Appeal's decision to quash a prison sentence imposed on a first-time drunk-driver with a high alcohol reading. However, Mr Justice Sachs's judgment contains a key sentence: "There are other perfectly appropriate ways of dealing with people who drive with excess alcohol."

One such way includes courses for drunken drivers run by the probation service in many areas. These cover the medical, social and financial effects of drunken driving and its potential effect on accident victims and offenders' families. The aim is to help offenders to change their patterns of drinking.

Combined with a probation order and disqualification, these courses have proved an effective way of dealing with many drink-drivers, including repeat offenders and those with particularly high readings. The vast majority of offenders who attend them are not reconvicted of alcohol-related offences.

Unlike prison sentences, these methods increase public protection by helping offenders to become better and safer drivers by the time they get their licences back.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL CAVADINO,
Chair,
Penal Affairs Consortium,
169 Clapham Road, SW9.
January 10.

From Professor K. T. V. Grattan

Sir, Whilst almost everyone will welcome the greater responsibility shown by motorists over drinking and driving, a closer inspection of the figures in your report on breath-test failures over the Christmas period (January 3) shows that when the available figures are viewed as a percentage of tests carried out, the rate varies from just over 1 per cent to about 8 per cent, averaging at about 4.5 per cent.

For the largest available single sample, from Scotland, the failure rate was just over 1 per cent of the 75,735 tests taken, implying a *pass rate* of nearly 99 per cent.

Surely such figures imply that the era of random testing has actually arrived, in spite of protestations to the contrary.

Yours faithfully,
K. T. V. GRATTAN,
City University,
School of Engineering,
Northampton Square, EC1.

Amplified opera

From the General Director of English National Opera

Sir, Following letters from Dr Max Prola (December 21), Mr Richard Fisher (December 26) and Mr Ralph Emery (January 3), deplored the sound enhancement used in English National Opera's current production of *La Belle Vivante* at the London Coliseum, may I quote from your review of the production published on December 27? "The spoken dialogue, discretely amplified, is now audible..."

I assure your correspondents and our audiences that ENO does not amplify singing or recitatives. Operetta demands the lightest of touches with the spoken word, however, and in a theatre the size of the London Coliseum with almost 2,500 seats, discreet sound enhancement is being used in *La Belle Vivante* only for the dialogue, as has been the case in certain productions for quite a few years.

Yours faithfully,

DENNIS MARKS,
General Director,
London Coliseum,
St Martin's Lane, WC2.

V & A funding

From Mr D. A. Callard

Sir, An entrance fee of £10 would be too much for many who might want to visit the V & A (article, Arts, January 8) but, while charging may not be a solution to its funding problems, as the Director, Alan Borg, claims, it could at least be part of the solution.

When I subsidised in Paris, all museums were free on a Thursday but charged on other days. Might not some variation of this (£1 entrance Thursday, £4 other weekdays, £6 weekend) be a compromise acceptable to all?

Yours sincerely,

D. A. CALLARD,
136 Johnston Road,
Llanishen, Cardiff.
January 8.

Post-turkey torture

From the Reverend Ivor E. Scott-Oldfield

Sir, The plight of Mrs Miller (letter, January 6), who found the Christmas presents she bought going for half-price on Boxing Day, brought back to me John Gilpin's comment on his wife that, though up pleasure she was bent, she had a frugal mind.

Mrs Miller could, in future, have both the pleasure in giving, and the frugality of purchasing, presents by the simple expedient of celebrating the Epiphany rather than Christmas.



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
January 10: The Princess Royal, President, Royal Yachting Association this afternoon attended the London International Boat Show, at Earls Court Exhibition Centre, London SW5.

Her Royal Highness, Colonel-in-Chief, The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment, later received Lieutenant Colonel Mark Jackson upon relinquishing his appointment as Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, and Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Mercer upon assuming the appointment.

KENSINGTON PALACE
January 10: The Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon, President, The Royal Ballet, was present this evening at a performance of "Manon" at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, as part of the Hamlyn Westminster Week.

Today's royal engagements

The Princess Royal, as President of The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, will visit Leedes Care Centre, Leeming House, Vicar Lane, at 11.00am will attend a fundraising luncheon at Direct Line House, The Headrows, Leeds, at 12.05pm and will visit Shipton College, Exhibition Road, Salford, Shipton, 2.10pm, as Patron, Victim Support, will attend a meeting of Victim Support Merseyside branch, Parish Centre, St Nicholas Parish Church, Chapel Street, Liverpool, at 5.00pm, and as President of the British Olympic Association, will attend a viewing of the film *Charlottis Fire* for the British Olympic Appeal at Liverpool Town Hall at 7.00pm.

Today's events

The Queen's Life Guard mounts at Horse Guards at 11.00am.

M François Mitterrand

A book of condolence on the death of M François Mitterrand, former President of France, has been opened at the French Embassy, 58 King's Way, Trafalgar Square, SW1. Anyone wishing to sign is invited to do so on Thursday, January 11, and Friday, January 12, from 10am to 5pm.

Lavinia Duchess of Norfolk, LG

A Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Lavinia Duchess of Norfolk, LG, will be held in the Cathedral of Our Lady and St Philip Howard, Arundel, on Friday, March 1, 1996 at 2.30pm. Seats will be reserved for official representatives to whom tickets will be sent.

Church of Scotland

Translation
The Rev William B Ross from Fendochy with Portknockie to Alvie & Inish.

Retirements

The Rev J A Keith Angus from Braemar with Crathie.

The Rev Thomas A Bertram from Palma Waterside.

The Rev W J R Hay from Buchanan with Drymen.

The Rev Joseph T Eddie from Fife's Wester with Meldreth with Montrose.

The Rev Charles A Leggett from Craigiebank, Dundee.

The Rev David W McCreadie from Kirkcaldy.

The Rev Ian W Robertson from Colvend, Southwick and Kirkbean.

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PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

Anniversaries today

BIRTHS: II Parmigianino, painter, Parma, Italy, 1503; Alexander Hamilton, American statesman, Nevins, West Indies, 1755; Sir Charles Hastings, physician, founder of the British Medical Association, Ludlow, 1794; Sir John Macdonald, Prime Minister of Canada 1867-73, 1878-91, Glasgow, 1815; William James, psychologist, New York, 1842; George Curzon, Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, Viceroy of India 1898-1905, Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire, 1859; Harry Gordon Selfridge, founder of the London store, Ripon, Wisconsin, 1864; Alan Parker, writer, Peter Pan, 1903.

DEATHS: Domenico Ghirlandaio, historian, London, 1494; Cardinal Pedro González de Mendoza, prelate and statesman, Spain, 1495; Sir Hans Sloane, physician and collector, London, 1753; Louis François Roubillac, sculptor, London, 1762; Domenico Cimarelli, composer, Venice, 1801; Friedrich von Schlegel, philosopher and historian, Dresden, 1829; Francis Scott Key, poet, Baltimore, 1843; Georges Eugene Haussmann, architect who re-planned Paris, Paris, 1891; Thomas Hardy, novelist and poet, Dorchester, 1928; Caravaggio, painter, Almaden, 1571; Hugo Gernsback, publisher, New York, 1961; Michael J. S. Smith, founder of the London store, Ripon, Wisconsin, 1864; Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, Prime Minister of India 1964-66; Tadeusz Górecki, sculptor, Chur, Switzerland, 1966; Richard Crompton, author, 1969; Padraic Colum, poet, Enfield, Connecticut, 1972; Charing Cross station was opened, London, 1864; Insulin first used successfully in the treatment of diabetes, 1922; King Zog of Albania was de-throned, 1946; The Open University awarded its first degrees, 1973.

Dinners

Mr Clifford S Dennis, Master of the Woolmen's Company, presented the Woolmen's Company silver medal and prize to Dr Geraldine R Rogers, from New Zealand, for her research work in wool at Leeds University, at a dinner held last night at Painters Hall. Lord Carter was the guest of honour and Mr John E Townsend, MP, also spoke. Among others present were:

Professor C E R Maddison, Mr Edward Tupper, Baillie of the Weavers' Company and the Masters of the Clothworkers' Horners, the Merchant Taylors' Company and the Merchant Taylors of the City of York Companies.

Foundation for Science and Technology

Lord Butterworth, Chairman of the Council of the Foundation for Science and Technology, presided at a lecture and dinner discussion held last night at the Royal Society. The Hon Jonathan Porritt, Mr J G Speirs and Sir Crispin Tickell were the speakers.

Appointments

Mr Christopher Meyer to be Ambassador to Germany, in succession to Sir Christopher Mallaby who will be retiring from the Diplomatic Service in July.

Latest wills

Mr Nicholas Peter Val Fleming, of Nettlebed, Oxfordshire, the author, journalist and farmer, son of Peter Fleming and Celia Johnson, and nephew of Ian Fleming, left estate valued at £9,825.54 net. Other estates include (not before tax):

Mr Geoffrey Harry Langdon Andrew, of Liverpool, £1,655,322.

Lord-Lieutenant

The Earl of Scarbrough has been appointed Lord-Lieutenant of South Yorkshire in succession to Mr James Hugh Neill, who will retire on March 29.

Mr Nicholas Peter Val Fleming, of Nettlebed, Oxfordshire, the author, journalist and farmer, son of Peter Fleming and Celia Johnson, and nephew of Ian Fleming, left estate valued at £9,825.54 net. Other estates include (not before tax):

Mr Geoffrey Harry Langdon Andrew, of Liverpool, £1,655,322.

DEATHS

BARKER - Peacefully on January 8th, Alan much loved father, husband and great-grandfather. Services: St Edmund's Church, Wokingham, 1.30pm, followed by a private service at St Edmund's, 12th at 3 pm. Interment at Salisbury Cathedral, 1.30pm. £1,045.26 (for details). No flowers, donations if wished, to Friends of the Royal Hospital, Jersey Street, London SW1.

BARRON - Jennifer, wife of R.W. Barron, died on January 10th, 1996. Services: St Edmund's Church, Wokingham, 1.30pm, followed by a private service at St Edmund's, 12th at 3 pm. Interment at Salisbury Cathedral, 1.30pm. £1,045.26 (for details). No flowers, donations if wished, to Friends of the Royal Hospital, Jersey Street, London SW1.

BELL - Professor R.P. Bell, formerly Belli, died on January 9th, 1996, peacefully at home, 90 years old. Services: St Edmund's Church, Wokingham, 1.30pm, followed by a private service at St Edmund's, 12th at 3 pm. Interment at Salisbury Cathedral, 1.30pm. £1,045.26 (for details). No flowers, donations if wished, to Friends of the Royal Hospital, Jersey Street, London SW1.

BENNETT - Sidney Williams passed away on 8th January 1996 aged 70 years. Services: St Edmund's Church, Wokingham, 1.30pm, followed by a private service at St Edmund's, 12th at 3 pm. Interment at Salisbury Cathedral, 1.30pm. £1,045.26 (for details). No flowers, donations if wished, to Friends of the Royal Hospital, Jersey Street, London SW1.

BIRCH - George Stephenson, 96, of Market Weighton, East Riding, died on January 4th at the James Birches Nursing Home, Market Weighton, 96. Services: St Edmund's Church, Wokingham, 1.30pm, followed by a private service at St Edmund's, 12th at 3 pm. Interment at Salisbury Cathedral, 1.30pm. £1,045.26 (for details). No flowers, donations if wished, to Friends of the Royal Hospital, Jersey Street, London SW1.

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OBITUARIES

Professor J. P. Kenyon, FBA, 17th-century historian, died in Norwich on January 6 aged 66. He was born in Shireham on June 18, 1927.

JOHN KENYON was one of the leading English historians of the 17th century. He quickly achieved an international reputation and held many distinguished posts on both sides of the Atlantic. In Britain he was a university lecturer at Cambridge and held chairs at the universities of Hull and St Andrews; in the United States he held a visiting professorship at Columbia University, 1959-60, and was Distinguished Professor of Early Modern British History at the University of Kansas, 1967-94.

By his early fifties Kenyon's achievements had been recognised by an honorary degree from Sheffield, a Fellowship of the British Academy, and the invitation to give the Ford Lectures at Oxford — still for many historians the ultimate accolade of their professional careers.

John Phillips Kenyon first established his reputation at Christ's College, Cambridge. He was one of long line of distinguished historians picked and promoted by Sir John Plumb, the doyen of Christ's historians for the last 50 years. Historians of the calibre of Rupert Hall, Barry Supple, Frank Spooner, Neil Kendrick, John Burrow, Quentin Skinner, Norman Stone, Geoffrey Parker, Eric Stokes, Simon Schama, Clive Holmes, David Cannadine, Linda Colley, Joachim

PROFESSOR J. P. KENYON



ably have wanted. He was appointed to a university lectureship within a year of his arrival in Cambridge and became in quick succession a college lecturer, director of studies, and junior proctor. And, by his early thirties, he had been offered and accepted a chair at Hull where he was to stay for the next 19 years.

His rapid promotion was amply justified by his scholarly output. He made his reputation at Cambridge by publishing in the same year both his major research monograph *Robert Spencer Earl of Sunderland* (still in many scholars' eyes his best book) and his influential general study of *The Stuarts*. They were both published in 1958.

His subsequent publications consolidated his reputation but did not advance it as much as he would have liked. He published eight substantial books during the course of his career, never leaving the confines of the English 17th century except for his more general survey of British historiography in *The History Men* (1983). In this book, he aimed for the wider audience he had reached as a book reviewer for many years on *The Observer*.

His general history reviews for *The Observer* allowed him to demonstrate that, for all his curmudgeonly pose, his public judgments were both elegantly written and remarkably generous. His prose reflected his beautiful, precise calligraphy far more accurately than the bar-room bluntness he often adopted in person.

The elegant prose did not come easily to him. Those who

Whaley, Niall Ferguson and many others were launched on their successful careers by Plumb's patronage and support at Christ's. Kenyon was one of the first of the Christ's stable to make his mark but in many ways he was an atypical product of the Plumb school. He was less radical and less secular in his sympathies than the typical Christ's historian. More significantly, he was more of an outsider than most. Like Plumb himself, but unlike most of his protégés, Kenyon was a product of a grammar school and one of the old civic universities. He was educated at King Edward VII School, Sheffield, and then

LINCOLN KIRSTEIN



Lincoln Kirstein, founder and general director of New York City Ballet, died in New York on January 5 aged 88. He was born in Rochester, New York State, on May 4, 1907.

A MAN of formidable intellectual gifts and determination, Lincoln Kirstein was active in many spheres of artistic and literary life, but his chief monument will be the foundation and nourishing of New York City Ballet, which he saw grow from frail beginnings into one of the world's greatest dance companies. With that achievement went the facilitating of George Balanchine's career as the finest and most influential of this century's choreographers. Kirstein defined their relationship with the words: "We never had a quarrel, we never had much discussion. We just got on with what had to be done."

Kirstein had a profound moral sense of the contribution that art should make to society, and saw in the disciplines of classical ballet (he abhorred most modernists) a force that could give people richer and better lives. A tall, craggy man, stern in appearance and always dressed in dark suits, he looked like a successful lawyer. But there

was kindness and generosity in his nature, and his heart burned with a consuming passion for his chosen work.

Lincoln Edward Kirstein was the son of a man who had risen from beginnings as a travelling salesman to become a partner in the leading store, Filene's. Their circumstances were comfortable, and the boy's uncertainty about a career was indulged.

His early ambition was to become a visual artist but he found himself without the skill to satisfy his own developing standards. However, at Harvard he was one of the founders of the Harvard Society for Contemporary Arts, which organised exhibitions of Picasso, Matisse, Braque and American artists including Alexander Calder and Buckminster Fuller. Its work has been seen as the forerunner of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which was started soon afterwards.

Kirstein and his college friends also started a literary and art quarterly, *Hound & Horn*, which had a good reputation but ran at a loss for seven years. Thanks to these activities he met many artists, writers and benefactors whose help later proved valuable; his older sister Mina had already introduced him, during a teenage visit to London, to the Bloomsbury Group.

Kirstein's enthusiasm for ballet began as much from written accounts and picture books as from his limited early experience, but he did see the Diaghilev Ballet in Europe and took some ballet classes from Rudin. Having met Romola Nijinsky, he helped her substantially in writing her biography of her husband Vaslav and getting it published.

By 1933 Kirstein had come to the idea that America needed its own ballet company and that the best way to achieve this was to invite one of the greatest Russian ballet masters to run it. After hesitating between Massine and Balanchine, he chose the latter apparently because, al-

though then less established creatively, he impressed Kirstein by his grasp of the possibilities. Kirstein was able to call on some of his friends to put up money to begin the venture.

Balanchine famously insisted that a school must be the cornerstone, and they opened the School of American Ballet at the beginning of 1934, when he and Kirstein were both still in their twenties. Before the year was out, the students were publicly performing the first version of one of Balanchine's best ballets, *Serenade*. But it was by no means plain sailing. During the 1930s the American Ballet had its artistic and financial ups and downs, including a tempestuous, brief, but memorable period as resident company to the Metropolitan Opera.

During this time Kirstein also ran a sister company, Ballet Caravan, specifically to foster young American choreographers. Two of the works he commissioned for it, *Filling Station* and *Billy the Kid*, both with books by Kirstein, have survived. Early in the Second World War the two companies merged briefly for a South American tour. But a hiatus followed while Balanchine had to find work elsewhere and Kirstein's US Army service took him to Europe. He had enlisted in

the Corps of Engineers, became a dispatch rider, and later served notably in the Monuments, Fine Arts & Archives Office, rescuing works of art stolen by the Nazis.

In 1946 he and Balanchine founded the Ballet Society, a producing organisation for a subscription audience, from which New York City Ballet grew two years later. Within another two years Kirstein had negotiated a long summer season for the company at Covent Garden, and exchange productions with Sadler's Wells Ballet. This helped to consolidate its reputation at home and since then, through all vicissitudes, the company has never looked back.

Kirstein all this while continued other activities. He was a prolific author (including novels and poetry) and editor, besides producing American operas and organising exhibitions of American art. The most influential of his books were probably the polemical *Blast at Ballet: Movement and Metaphor*, an attempt to define the aesthetics of dance; and a lavish history of the first three decades of New York City Ballet. He also, during the 1940s, founded and ran *Dance Index*, a scholarly but lively magazine, and helped to introduce American audiences to Japanese music and theatre by taking *Gagaku* and the Grand Kabuki to New York.

Having made New York City Ballet possible in its beginnings, and overseen its growth and move to the palatial new State Theatre at Lincoln Centre, Kirstein finally helped hand it on to a new generation after Balanchine's death in 1983. His reward for this was six years later to be pushed ignominiously out of his post as general director of the school and company, following some disputes within the organisation — his occasional brainstorm, and perhaps a manic-depressive tendency, upset some financial supporters. However, he remained loyal to his offspring, and firmly defended Balanchine's successor, Peter Martins, from some recent tendentious criticism.

Kirstein married, in 1941, Fidelma Cadmus. There were no children.

— DAVID EVANS
MARK HARRISON, PICTURE DESK

KÁROLY GRÓSZ



Károly Grósz, former Prime Minister of Hungary and General Secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party, died from cancer on January 7 aged 65. He was born in 1930.

RULING Hungary briefly in the late 1980s just before the collapse of communism, Károly Grósz was to die in unloved obscurity. Yet there were moments at the height of his power when it looked as if he just might save Hungarian communism, and make of it something more or less acceptable to the Hungarian people.

Grósz could be a rumbustious companion — especially in his cups — but few things seemed to give him true satisfaction or real contentment.

A grim pessimism was his characteristic mood. He drank heavily for many years and in later life both his figure and his health suffered as a result. He overcame the effects of cancer of the bladder in his early sixties, but his weight had taxed his heart for many years.

When he retired from his chair at Kansas and returned to England, there were hopes that his gloom might lift.

His acceptance of an honorary research fellowship at the University of East Anglia and the evident satisfaction he took in his editing of *The Oxford Illustrated History of the English Civil Wars* suggested that a more serene period lay ahead. Alas, his sudden death had dashed such hopes.

He leaves his widow Angela, a son, two daughters and a stepdaughter.

Within the leadership Grósz found profound uncertainty. Communism was drifting towards the rocks. Grósz advocated tough political measures to control the situation and, at the same time, radical economic reform. Kádár, old and wary, was unwilling to back either, but in 1987 he made Grósz Prime Minister. Despite Grósz's efforts, the drift continued, until in May 1988 Kádár was driven from the office of General Secretary and Grósz took his place, keeping also the office of Prime Minister.

It was Grósz's chance to be his country's Gorbachev, but it came fatally late. He did his best, with demotic hard work, a relish for hard decisions and a blunt honesty of expression. He learnt hard lessons quickly, and his old-fashioned communism yielded to new realities. While trying to preserve political discipline (with a toughness that won him few friends) he opened the economy to a return of capitalism to Hungary and embraced private initiative.

But the other communist leaders wanted to move faster.

They hung Grósz's past and his reluctance to accept a multi-party system round his neck. In early 1989 he was driven to share power with his rivals and then gradually to cede it to them. When, in the autumn of that year, the party renamed itself the Hungarian Socialist Party it was left to Grósz and a small band of apparatchiks to continue to stand for communism. They were wiped out in the free elections of March and April 1990.

Grósz was quietly married, and had two sons. In the flesh, he struck foreign observers as coarse and even brutal, but realistic and honest. He came up in hard times through a hard system and achieved power too late to wrestle successfully with the problems that were overwhelming the party to which he had devoted his life. There will be little affection, but some respect, for his memory.

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THE TIMES TODAY

THURSDAY JANUARY 11 1996

NEWS

Israelis hail Husain peace trip

■ King Husain of Jordan became the first Arab monarch to visit Tel Aviv and he won the hearts and minds of the 400,000 inhabitants of this most Jewish of cities in a way which boosted the chances of peace in the Middle East.

In the most dramatic personal gesture since President Sadat of Egypt arrived in Jerusalem in 1977 and engineered the beginning of the end of old hostilities, the Jordanian leader defied the enemies of peace from the extremes of both the Jewish and Islamic communities Page 1

Terry Venables to quit as coach

■ Terry Venables is to stand down as England football coach after the European championships this summer to concentrate on a series of court cases arising from his dispute with Alan Sugar and allegations about his business dealings Page 1

Back from the dead

Daphne Banks, the woman who came back from the dead, said that she felt fine as the doctor who had declared her dead announced Page 1

Balloon let-down

An American balloonist's attempt to circumnavigate the globe came to grief off Canada. Steve Fossett, a Chicago banker, managed to land his one-man balloon, Solo Challenger, on a field in New Brunswick after taking off from South Dakota Page 1

Blair on attack

Tony Blair claimed that John Major had abandoned one-nation politics with his rejection of the Labour leader's vision of a stakeholder society Page 2

Hell not so bad

Traditional images of hellfire and damnation are wrong, says a Church of England report which criticises some past teachings for trying to frighten people too much Page 3

Air 'fight' escape

Four crewmen ejected to safety when two RAF jet fighters collided while apparently engaged in mock combat at about 800ft over Lincolnshire Page 5

Bypass battle

Work on the Newbury bypass was abandoned for the second day running when protesters overcame guards Page 6

Top of the form pub prize

■ The headmaster of a comprehensive school was criticised for offering pub luncheon vouchers as form prizes. Bob Salisbury of the Garibaldi School, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, said: "What happens when a pupil does well? His parents take him or her out for a meal. Now the pupils can take their parents or grandparents and get £10 off the bill" Page 1



King Hussein of Jordan is greeted by Shimon Peres, the Israeli Prime Minister, on the Arab monarch's historic visit to Tel Aviv. Page 1

BUSINESS

Gas: TransCo, which operates Britain's pipeline network, is calling on the Government to delay the start of competition to supply households because the computer system could fail Page 23

Tory debacle

Conservative Central Office was blamed for the debacle over a black parliamentary candidate who will be deselected for lying about his past Page 10

Hostage crisis

Russian troops ringed a convoy of buses carrying Chechen gunmen and dozens of captives on the border with Chechnya on the second day of a hostage seizure that has thrown the Government into crisis Page 23

Rocket seized

The rocket launcher thought to have been used in Tuesday's deadly attack on a crowded Sarajevo tram was confiscated by French Nato forces Page 12

Budget talks

Republican leaders were exploring radical strategies to advance their "revolution" after the breakdown of budget negotiations with President Clinton Page 13

SPORT

Athletics: Diane Modahl, the British 800 metres runner, will be able to run competitively while the authorities decide whether or not to exonerate her of alleged drug-taking Page 38

Savoy: The Wontner family, the controlling shareholder, is supporting its old enemy Forte as it fights Granada's takeover Page 23

Bonuses: Despite the strong performance of the stockmarket last year, Norwich Union froze its annual bonuses on life and pensions business while Commercial Union and Scottish Life cut annual bonuses on life policies Page 23

Markets: The FTSE 100 fell 29.1 to 367.2. Sterling fell to \$1.4542 and DM2.2304 to DM2.2225 Page 26

ARTS

New films: Paul Verhoeven's flesh-filled new film, *Showgirls*, proves to be a tacky and pointless mess; Carl Franklin's *Devil in a Blue Dress* is an evocative thriller set in 1940s Los Angeles Page 31

Crickets: England will hope for an improved display in the second one-day international against South Africa in the calmer venue of Bloemfontein Page 38

Rugby union: A nationwide survey of English clubs by Michael Lord, a Conservative MP, has found a widespread desire to retain amateurism in the game Page 41

Squash: The national championships, which start in Birmingham today, give Del Harris, the British No. 1, a further chance to continue his resurgent form Page 42

TELEVISION**IN THE TIMES**

■ **POP ON FRIDAY**
Meet the Mavericks, a band on a good run, plus David Sinclair and Caitlin Moran

■ **STUDENT MOAN-**
The chief executive of the Student Loans Company on the cash crisis facing his clients

Souvenirs

Laurence Olivier wanted to be at best at everything and he kept everything. Derek Granger is sifting the mementos Page 17

Young at art: Children learn about the elegant craft of bookbinding, from the experts at the British Library Page 32

Important year: Sir Philip Dowson has just been re-elected to his third year as president of the Royal Academy, a year when, he says, the future of the institution will be cast through expansion and development Page 33

Street smarts: A refreshingly funny slice of seedy London life can be found in Simon Brett's comedy, *Goldhawk Road* Page 33

Fact and fiction

The life of Lincoln, a rough-hewn man; how Lloyd George won the war; a history of Kew Gardens; the short stories of Julian Barnes Pages 34, 35

Don't go to jail:

The Foreign Office is planning to make videos listing what should and should not be done to avoid trouble Page 36

Mitterrand

Mitterrand was a large man with literary gifts that enabled him to obscure his meanings and his goals. But history will eventually unlock the secrets he so adeptly tried to keep — *Washington Post*

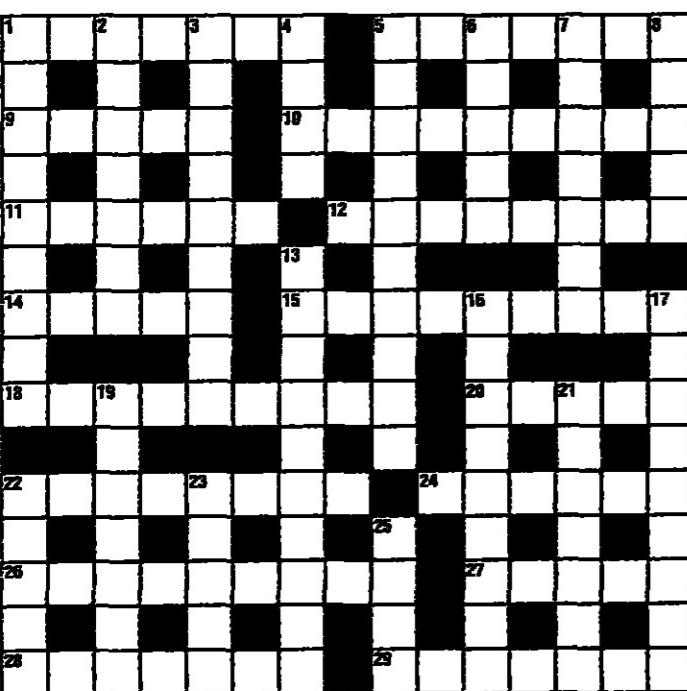
If American liberalism wants a Waterloo over the budget, then let's get on with the campaign for the House, the Senate and the Presidency *Wall Street Journal*

Professor J. P. Kenyon

Historian: Karel Götz, Prime Minister of Hungary: Lincoln Kirstein, founder of New York City Ballet; The Mackintosh of Mackintosh, clan chieftain Page 21

Stakeholder economy

BBC head: drink-driving; no-fault divorce; courts-martial defects Page 19

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,061**ACROSS**

- Awkward steps negotiated in preparation for deal (7).
- Important Conservative putting forward 'love for intolerance' (7).
- Town-based university's right to be exclusive (5).
- Amount of money returned by bloke snatching it — capital fellow (6).
- Stunned master in a daze, wandering about (6).
- Cured? Soldiers weren't (8).
- By no means quick, runs into one trap (5).
- Firmly established some pop music, foul (4-5).
- These help to water hard round seed in spots (4-5).
- Tree Roman turned over in the middle (5).
- Mixed vegetables in soil with disease, in which one's planted (5).
- Old documents showing extremes of poverty in most of capital (6).
- Tale can spread widely about party, based on brief account (9).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,060

HEROICALLY COMPLETED**REGIMENTED OVER****SKA APPALAS****SCAM****LE BUCH****ASPIRANT VIGRAMA****IMPLIANT DENTISTED****IT IS A R****UPON WINE NUGGETS****DE SORRA****ERROR DISREPAIR****IS A A DUE I****SILENT PARTNER****27 Dupe — one in party is into it (5).**

28 Dutious operator not entirely ruthless, having reformed (7).

29 A lot of chickens, and how they come when tried? (7).

31 From grotesque am I shrinking, easily frightened? (9).

32 Offence generating pointlessly senseless anger (7).

33 American's to tell police of clue — print left by this? (6-3).

34 Novel taking up latter part of afternoon on the radio? (4).

35 Madman needing two means of containment (6-4).

36 Musical expert, one of many in academe (5).

37 Insignificant little bottle underlies most of drug experience (7).

38 Crop that is left in yard (5).

39 Shopwreather favouring earlier closing around ends of June and August (10).

40 Modern compasser raising pavions with a record (9).

41 Studs? It's an attempt to attain medical discipline (9).

42 Calls out for dishevelled hiker to get on board (7).

43 What's left of the road, perhaps? (7).

44 Hot food found first in this part of Ireland (5).

45 Ring including *Rheingold*, finally, as part of cycle (5).

46 Messy chow upset dishes, dropping one in middle (4).

47 Times Two Crossword, page 44

The qualifying puzzle for The Times 1996 Crossword Championship will appear on January 15.

TIMES WEATHERCALL

For the latest regional forecast, 24 hours a day, dial 0815 500 followed by the appropriate code

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Wales & Borders: 0815 500 1005
Scotland: 0815 500 1006
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National traffic and roadworks: 0815 500 1003
Motorway: 0815 500 1004

Highways Agency: 0815 500 1005

North East England: 0815 500 1006

Scotland: 0815 500 1007

Wales: 0815 500 1008

Northern Ireland: 0815 500 1009

All AA Roadwatch is charged at 25 pence per minute, plus 10p per minute of call time.

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday: Highest day temp: London, 20.2°C; Birmingham, 19.8°C; Bristol, 19.8°C; Cardiff, 19.8°C; Edinburgh, 19.8°C; Glasgow, 19.8°C; Belfast, 19.8°C; Northern Ireland, 19.8°C

Lowest day temp: London, 11.2°C;

Birmingham, 11.2°C; Bristol, 11.2°C;

Cardiff, 11.2°C; Edinburgh, 11.2°C;

Glasgow, 11.2°C; Belfast, 11.2°C

Lowest night temp: London, 10.2°C;

Birmingham, 10.2°C; Bristol, 10.2°C;

Cardiff, 10.2°C; Edinburgh, 10.2°C;

Glasgow, 10.2°C; Belfast, 10.2°C

Lowest sea temp: London, 11.2°C;

Birmingham, 11.2°C; Bristol, 11.2°C;

Cardiff, 11.2°C; Edinburgh, 11.2°C;

Glasgow, 11.2°C; Belfast, 11.2°C

Lowest wind speed: London, 10.2mph;

Birmingham, 10.2mph; Bristol, 10.2mph;

Cardiff, 10.2mph; Edinburgh, 10.2mph;

Glasgow, 10.2mph; Belfast, 10.2mph

Lowest pressure: London, 1001.2mb;

Birmingham, 1001.2mb; Bristol, 1001.2mb;

Cardiff, 1001.2mb; Edinburgh, 1001.2mb;

Glas

JANET BUSH 27

Economic optimists ignore Europe at their peril



BOOKS 34, 35

Masterly story of Lincoln made from a piece of folly



TRAVEL 36, 37

The magic of Paris by Eurostar for £69 return

DEL BOY GETS BACK IN LINE Sport 38-44

THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

THURSDAY JANUARY 11 1996

Insurers warn of gloom ahead over bonus payments

By MARIANNE CIRPHEY

PENSIONS and life policyholders were given a warning yesterday to expect a year of disappointing returns after three major life companies cut or froze bonus rates. Despite the strong performance of the stock market last year, Norwich Union froze its annual bonuses on life and pensions policies while Commercial Union and Scottish Life cut bonuses on life policies.

The companies defended the move as necessary after poor growth in the early 1990s, but analysts suggested the industry in

general was concerned about competition and a fall in new business. Friends Provident also blamed a cut in bonus rates announced last week on the legacy of poor stock market performance in 1994. Rates are an important indication of how companies have fared during the year.

Watson Wyatt, the actuaries, said cuts were the result of life companies paying "over-generous" bonuses during the 1980s and that other firms were likely to follow suit.

Dick Squires, a partner specialising in insurance, said:

"Payments were high in the 1980s but for the last couple of years some

companies have not cut back as much as they ought to have done. In 1994 many companies were making losses but continued to pay out the same bonuses."

Rates were likely to remain relatively low, but continuing low inflation would mean they would provide a reasonable return in real terms, he added.

Richard Harvey, finance director of Norwich Union, which is to decide by the end of the year whether to end its mutual status, said the group would pay out a record £800 million this year on nearly 50,000 life and pensions

policies that were maturing, compared with £600 million paid to 40,000 people in 1994.

"With-profit policies are designed to smooth out these peaks and troughs of volatile investment markets," he said. "Low inflation will mean lower investment returns in the 1990s when compared with the soaring figures of the eighties, but investors will still enjoy good real returns from our well-diversified investment portfolio."

For Norwich Union policyholders, annual bonus rates remain unchanged for unitised policies. This is 6.5 per cent or life policies

and for pensions it remains at 7.5 per cent.

Additional bonus rates have been improved to reward policyholders who keep to the long-term commitment of these plans. Annual bonus rates also remain unchanged on conventional with-profit life and pensions policies: for life the bonus is 2.5 per cent on the sum assured plus 4.5 per cent on attaching bonus for pensions, the rates are 2.5 per cent and 5.5 per cent respectively.

Commercial Union announced bonuses on the sum assured for conventional life policies had been reduced from 4 per cent to 3.5 per

cent and from 7.25 to 7 per cent on unitised with-profit life policies. Conventional pension bonus rates have been cut from 4.8 to 4 per cent, and unitised with-profit pensions fall from 9 to 8.5 per cent.

For Scottish Life policyholders, the bonus on the sum assured for individual life policies affected after 1988 has been reduced from 2.75 to 2.5 per cent.

Terminal bonus amendments on life policies range from no change at terms of 10 years or less, a reduction at terms of 15 and 20 years, and an increase at terms of 25 years and above.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES	FT-SE 100	3671.5
Yield (%)	3.51%	
FPS-AAPL share	1200	20612.32
New York	Dow Jones	5095.23
S&P Composite	604.50	

U.S. RATE	Federal Funds	110.50*
Long Bond	8.12%	

LONDON MONEY	3-month Interbank	61.4%
Life long gilt future (Mar)	110.50	

STERLING	New York	1.5453
S	London	1.5457
DM	2.2225	
FF	7.8225	
Yen	125.57	
S Index	94.1	

EUROPE	London	1.5453
DM	1.4400*	
FF	4.9325*	
Yen	102.50*	
S Index	94.1	

ASIA	Tokyo close Yen (Mar)	104.40
London close	\$368.75	(S)

* denotes midday trading price

Christmas store sales fail to impress City

By SARAH BAGNALL

CHRISTMAS trading statements from Dixons and Next sent shockwaves through the stores sector yesterday, pushing shares lower as analysts revised in their expectations of retailers' performances over the festive period.

Among the shares hit were Next, down 16p to 437p, Dixons, down 14p to 409p, Boots, down 11p to 598p, and JB, down 19p to 570p.

Paul Morris, an analyst at SBC Warburg, said: "The City had priced in a phenomenally good Christmas and was expecting to have to make a large number of profit forecasts upgraded. When prices have gone up to these levels, companies have to deliver in spades."

Next and Dixons were expected to be among the sector's star performers and although they both turned in good performances they failed to impress the City. Next saw a 13 per cent rise in high street sales and a 17 per cent increase in mail order sales between August and Christmas Eve—marking the fifth year in succession of double-digit sales growth.

Dixons posted a 10 per cent rise in like-for-like sales in the first eight weeks of the second half, which includes Christmas

Tempus page 26

Dixons disappoints, page 25



Robert Shrager, finance director of Dixons, left, with John Clare, chief executive

Dixons disappoints, page 25

George eases stance

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

EDDIE GEORGE, Governor of the Bank of England, was yesterday notably less hawkish on inflation, saying that he is not concerned that growth will get out of hand this year and underplaying his own worries last week about wage settlements.

Interviewed on Reuters Television, Mr George said that inflation will probably be at 2.5 per cent or below in 18 months to two years' time and said that the economy could grow at above 3 per cent in the short-term without higher inflation.

He said he expected consumer spending to pick up this year, but this optimism was balanced by concern about the extent of the economic slowdown in Europe, particularly

in Germany and France. These worries were highlighted by yesterday's trade figures.

Britain's deficit with the rest of the world widened in October to its worst level for three years, totalling £1.66 billion compared with £972 million in September, largely because of a widening trade overall.

Another sign of economic weakness came with the seventeenth consecutive monthly fall in the longer leading cyclical indicator in November, reaching its lowest level since early 1991.

The Central Statistical Office said that more than half of the deterioration was because of unusually large imports of silver. Even stripping out oil and erratic items, the deficit widened in October.

Economists noted that later figures have already shown

that the non-EU deficit narrowed sharply in November and said that October's figures overplayed the extent of Britain's worsening trade performance. However, the CSO said that the deficit was still on a widening trend overall.

The biggest deterioration was in non-European Union trade, but the deficit with Europe also widened.

The Central Statistical Office said that more than half of the deterioration was because of unusually large imports of silver. Even stripping out oil and erratic items, the deficit widened in October.

Economists noted that later figures have already shown

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Economic view, page 27

Home prices, page 24

Eurostar blow to Tunnel's future

By JONATHAN PRYNN, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

EUROTUNNEL'S fight for financial survival was dealt another setback yesterday when new forecasts for the Eurostar high-speed train service revealed that growth in passenger traffic will fall disastrously below its target for the rest of the decade.

Sir Alastair Morton, chairman of Eurotunnel, said that the latest projections delivered by European Passenger Services, the British, French and Belgian state-owned operator of Eurostar, were "hopelessly" behind previous expectations.

The original projections for Eurostar made in 1986 forecast that 16.5 million passengers would use the 180mph Channel Tunnel train in its first year of operation, then expected to be 1993, this fore-

cast was later cut to 13 million and then to 6 million in 1994.

In fact, last year, the first full year of Eurostar services, only 3 million passengers used the Waterloo-Paris and Brussels train. This is expected to rise to 5 million this year. Passenger traffic is forecast to reach about ten million by the turn of the century.

As Eurotunnel receives 60 per cent of Eurostar's passenger revenue, the shortfall represents a serious loss of income for the debt-laden company at a time when it is fighting for financial survival.

A safety net built into its contract with EPS means Eurotunnel will receive a minimum of £200 million a year. However, this represents only a fraction of what Eurotunnel hoped to be earning by

Pennington, page 25

now. The safety net was only scheduled to be in place for the first few months of operation.

But latest forecasts suggest it will continue to be triggered until 2000 at earliest. "The railways have not delivered what their owners promised us," said Sir Alastair. "The fact is, the railways have failed to get stuck into their market particularly for tourists," he added, blaming poor marketing and high prices.

The EPS news came as Eurotunnel announced 1995 turnover of about £280 million. Sir Alastair said turnover this year was likely to grow at least 50 per cent to about £420 million, still less than the £500 million forecast in the October 1994 rights issue prospectus.

Morton: "poor marketing"

Wontners to back Forte in bid battle

By ERIC REGULY

THE Wontner family, the controlling shareholder of the Savoy Hotel group, has come out in support of Forte, its old enemy which is fighting a takeover attempt by Granada.

Granada has said it would sell Forte's 68 per cent equity stake in the Savoy if its £1.8 billion hostile offer for Forte succeeds. The Wontner family, which has voting control in spite of having only a relatively small piece of the equity.

Lord Thurso, one of the two Wontner nominees on the Savoy board, said: "It would suit the family if Forte won. It means that the family block could not be challenged." The

Wontner support for Forte would have been unimaginable a few years ago. Forte launched its takeover bid for the Savoy in 1981. The struggle lasted until 1994, when Forte reshaped the Savoy's board and management team.

Forte, if it remains independent, said it will distribute its Savoy shares to its shareholders. The Savoy predicted that pre-tax profits for 1995 would increase 165 per cent to £11.4 million. The annual dividend will be doubled to 14p for the A shares and 7p for the B shares, which have 20 times the voting power.

Pennington, page 25

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British Gas plea for freer market

CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

BRITISH GAS, which will supply household electricity when the market opens to full competition in 1998, yesterday called for new power suppliers to be largely free from accountability on service standards.

The company, which last year lost its charter mark for public service and which received a record number of complaints from its customers, said that the electricity regulator planned too many restrictions for new suppliers.

Derek Meachem, business development manager for British Gas's electricity division, told an Office of Electricity Regulation seminar in Birmingham that there was a danger of over-regulation. He questioned "whether it is necessary to report on the standards of performance. The consumer will find out the standards of service." He added: "With true competition there will be little need for such regulation."

The electricity regulator plans to make new suppliers report on their standards of service such as response to complaints and consumer satisfaction.

British Gas is looking at ways to provide a combined gas and electricity package to customers and to be a key player in the 1998 market. It is anxious to counter the erosion of its market share in gas supply and Mr Meachem told the meeting that it was critical for the electricity industry to drive ahead with plans for 1998.



The United Road Transport Union and Scottish Amicable have launched a £20 a month personal pension plan for members. With David Higginbottom, general secretary of the URTU, in the cab are, left, John Monks, general secretary of the TUC, and Brian Wilson, Labour MP for Cunningham North.

Trend in home prices still down despite some gains

BY ROBERT MILLER AND JANET BUSH

HOUSE PRICES in the UK fell in the final quarter of last year despite rises in four of the country's 12 regions, according to a survey published today. The average price paid was £61,127.

The Halifax, Britain's largest lender, says that house prices fell by 0.6 per cent between the third and fourth quarters of 1995, compared with a 1 per cent fall in the previous quarter. The society adds that house prices are now 1.5 per cent lower than in the final quarter of 1994.

Three of the four regions to record modest house price gains in the fourth quarter of 1995 are still below where they were a year ago. The North,

for example, was up 0.7 per cent in the last three months of the year but down 1.7 per cent on the same period in 1994. The South West, up 0.3 per cent on the quarter, is 2 per cent down on a year ago. The notable exception is Northern Ireland where quarterly house prices rose by 4.5 per cent and 11.5 per cent over the year fuelled by the peace process.

Of the three Northern regions, house prices in Yorkshire and Humberside fell sharpest at the end of 1995, by 1 per cent, continuing the latest downward trend which started in spring 1994. Over the past three months, 36,900 dwellings were begun, a drop of 22 per cent on the same three months a year ago.

Taking seasonally adjusted figures for private housing starts, November saw a small rise to 10,200 from 9,700 in October, but 24 per cent down on November 1994. Private starts in the three months to November were down 16.6 per cent on the previous three months, 26.8 per cent down on a year ago, and at their lowest since the three-month period to January 1993.

Michael Saunders, UK economist with Salomon Brothers, said that housing starts are a reasonable leading indicator of economic growth as a whole because they tend to capture the impact of base rate changes before other sectors of the economy.

PHILIP BASSETT

INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

BRITISH ENERGY, the company set up to run the nuclear industry's most modern reactors, indicated yesterday it may be in other energy markets such as gas within two years, though it denied nuclear power is in crisis.

The company said it was ruling out no options for future development after its announcement last month that it is abandoning plans for the construction of any further nuclear power stations.

BN's prospectus is likely to be issued in late spring, before the Government's flotation in June or July of the advanced gas-cooled reactors and the Sizewell B pressurised water reactor, leaving the Magnox reactors in the public sector.

Giving evidence yesterday to the Commons' all-party Trade and Industry Select Committee, BEB gave a clear indication that it is likely soon to move away from a complete reliance on nuclear power as its sole means of generating electricity for sale.

Robert Hawley, the chief executive of BEB, formed from Nuclear Electric and Scottish Nuclear, told MPs the timing of the sale meant it needed to decide its future strategy, including moving into related areas such as gas, "within one to two years".

BEB officials insisted that last month's decision to withdraw its application to build a new station at Sizewell C and to let lapse its planning consent for a further station at Hinkley Point C did not mean that no further nuclear stations would ever be built in Britain — though MPs viewed these statements sceptically.

In written evidence to the committee, BEB played down the impact of the move. "Nuclear power in the UK is not in crisis. Nuclear Electric's latest nuclear plant, the Sizewell B PWR, is performing well and has a planned operating life to take it to 2035."

Classic Bloodstock action group formed

A FORMER Conservative MP is to help to form an action group for dissatisfied shareholders in two Classic Bloodstock companies, the racing investment group that has raised nearly £5 million from about 7,000 investors, Classic Watch, which will "monitor closely" the financial health of Classic Bloodstock and Classic Bloodstock II, was launched yesterday by Tom Benyon. Mr Benyon founded the Guild of Shareholders and also heads the Society of Names, an umbrella group representing a number of action groups whose members lost hundreds of millions of pounds at Lloyd's of London. Mr Benyon is to attend an extraordinary shareholders' meeting on January 25 at Charnwood Stables.

Classic Bloodstock, which has been subject to a DTI investigation and incurred an automatic £1,000 penalty from Companies House for the late filing of its accounts, spent more than £800,000 in mailing glossy brochures to investors of privatisation issues.

Kingfisher in £60m deal

KINGFISHER, the Comet to B&Q retail group, has acquired a 20 per cent stake in Bif, France's fourth largest electrical chain through Darty, its French subsidiary. Kingfisher is paying nearly £60 million for the holding. Under the terms of the agreement, Kingfisher has the right to acquire the remaining 80 per cent in two years' time. The purchase reflects Kingfisher's strategy of building its operations into lead positions in attractive markets. But has a 5.1 per cent share of the French electricals market, compared with Darty's 2.9 per cent.

Tempus, page 26

Motorola shares fall

SHARES in Motorola were battered for the second day, casting a pall on Wall Street, after the communications equipment group yesterday confirmed investors' fears about its shrinking profits. Motorola's fourth-quarter profits fell short of Wall Street expectations, sliding 16 per cent to \$432 million from \$515 million even though sales rose to \$7.3 billion from \$6.5 billion. Earnings per share slipped to 72 cents from 87 cents, below analysts' forecasts of 88 cents. Annual net earnings were \$1.78 billion, compared with \$1.56 billion. The shares fell \$4.25 to \$49.25.

Fokker orders lift off

FOKKER, the troubled Dutch aircraft manufacturer owned by Germany's Daimler-Benz industrial group, received new orders for 63 aircraft in 1995, compared with 50 in 1994, the company said. The 63 firm orders comprised 16 for the Fokker 100, 31 for the smaller Fokker 70, and 16 for turboprops. "Fokker sees the significant increase in the amount of orders it has won in 1995 as confirmation of the upswing in demand from the airline market and an endorsement that its products are in tune with the requirements of the airlines," said the company.

Gold beats \$400 level

AGGRESSIVE US fund buying lifted the gold price above the \$400 an ounce level yesterday for the first time since August 1993. Dealers report active trading, which, at best, reached \$401.75. At the afternoon fix, the price was set at \$400. In later trading, it eased to \$398.75, still \$3 higher on the day. Analysts had long expected gold to breach the \$400 level. However, dealers said that the resilience of gold's swift advance will be tested tomorrow when technical market factors associated with option trading come into play. Silver rose 6 cents to 557 cents an ounce.

Shaftesbury expands

SHAFTESBURY, the property investment group based in Covent Garden estate in London with the £2.6 million purchase of eight shops with self-contained office and residential accommodation. The freeholds, which front Monmouth and Shelton streets, are opposite those bought by the company in June. Current income from the new purchase is around £230,000 a year. Shaftesbury has now invested about £17 million in the 33 shops and restaurants that comprise the Covent Garden estate. The purchase reflects the group's strategy of focusing on retail and tourist locations.

CRH buys again

CRH, the international building materials group based in Ireland, announced developments worth £158 million — in addition to a £130 million investment in Poland announced last October and the acquisitions in the US and Canada announced last month, worth a total £16.7 million. The latest investments comprise the £16.1 million acquisition of another 23 branches by CRH's Keyline builders' merchants subsidiary in Britain in six separate transactions; acquisitions totalling £12.4 million in mainland Europe, and £14 million spending on production facilities in the US.

AT&T plans to dial into British homes

BY ERIC REGULY

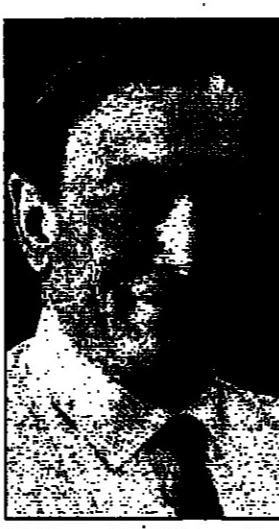
AT&T, the largest American phone company, said it plans to launch a residential service in Britain next year and hinted that the management changes at Cable and Wireless may present it with market opportunities.

AT&T had held talks with Lord Young of Graffham, the former executive chairman of C&W, and James Ross, the former chief executive, about buying C&W's 80 per cent stake in Mercury Commun-

ications. The talks failed because of disagreements over value. C&W's replacements who are yet to be appointed, may be more willing to sell.

Merrill Tutton, the UK president of AT&T, would not comment on whether the company would again try to buy Mercury.

AT&T yesterday announced the sponsorship of three new plays, including the Royal Shakespeare Company's upcoming *Slaughter City*.



Whitson: £75,000 donation

Charities share Midland's £1m

BY PATRICIA TEHAN, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

THREE charities will share £1 million from Midland Bank over the next three years after successfully pitching for the bank's charitable donations in a highly competitive tender.

After a two-month selection process, in which Midland invited 15 charities to produce aggressive pitches, the bank picked Age Concern, the National Deaf Children's Society, and Shelter. It plans to give £180,000 a year to Shelter, £100,000 a year to Age Concern, and £65,000 to Age Concern.

The charities were picked under the bank's new policy of supporting the areas of youth, the elderly and disability. The agreements with the three will make Midland the largest corporate donor to each of the charities.

Shelter will use Midland's

money to set up a "Network" service to provide advice to young people. It estimates that 90,000 young people will benefit. Age Concern will launch a "Safe & Warm" campaign through which it hopes to improve the lives of 25,000 people.

The National Deaf Children's Society will try to help 35,000 deaf children through a national mobile exhibition of technology and information.

The bank's former policy was to give amounts of an average £1,000 to a large number of charities.

The move comes on the heels of the well received decision last month by Keith Whitson, chief executive, to stop sending Christmas cards to customers and contacts and to give £75,000 to charities instead.

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

0171-782 7344

LEGAL NOTICES

DOMINO PRODUCTIONS LIMITED, **WARWICK FILM PRODUCTION LTD** and **VIDEOPRO FILMS LIMITED**, THE INSOLVENCY ACT 1986. Notice is hereby given that I, R W J Long of Royal Neptune Buildings, Grey's Inn, London, WC1X 8EE, am the sole liquidator of the members' committee by the members on 21st December 1995 Dated 22nd December 1995 B J LONG, Liquidator.

IN-BUILDING CONSTRUCTION LIMITED, 100 Newgate Street, London EC1A 7AA, a limited company pursuant to Section 96 of the Insolvency Act 1986, and a member of the creditors' committee. The company will be held at 100 Newgate Street, London EC1A 7AA, for the inspection of documents concerning the company's affairs on 18th January 1996 at 11.00AM until 18th February 1996 at 11.00AM. Notice of the date and place of the meeting will be given by the liquidator to the members.

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN</b

Business Roundup
Classic Bloodstock
action group formed

Kingsfitter in £60m de-

Motorola shares fall

Falkirk orders lift

Gold beats \$400

Sainsbury cuts

Credit blues again

Deadline nears for energy fiasco Protecting interests of cross-Channel investors Split shares past their sell-by date

The dangers of a gas leak

THE politicians' attempts to introduce competition into gas and electricity are heading for such a disastrous debut that there must be a few faint hearts there praying they will not still be in government when it arrives.

Open competition in domestic electricity in 1998 appears no nearer, with the industry deliberately dragging its feet because the companies can see no advantage in having their cosy monopolies prised open like an oyster. After the mess made of the competitive market for large users in 1994, one can

say, competition in gas is considerably worse, because the deadline is almost here. Now TransCo, ordered to conduct a limited trial from All Fools Day, has flipped open the calendar, counted on its fingers and proved it cannot be done.

It is tempting to blame British Gas, TransCo's owner, if only because blaming British Gas is the fashionable thing these days. But it is clear the Government, for ideological reasons, is forcing the newly demerged business to run before it can walk.

According to Harry Moulson at TransCo, which in the end has to make competition — and the pipeline system — work, Britain is trying to do in two years what has taken America ten. All the

same, Europe's fourth largest computer system has been equipped with the world's tenth largest database containing more than 18 million meter addresses.

But while TransCo is about ready to begin chasing down teething problems, the computer trials are being held up by the Trade Department's failure to issue licences to the 40 or so companies anxious to compete to supply gas. Chris Rees, of Touche Ross, has been drafted in by Ofgas, the industry regulator, to report on whether it is still possible to open up the pipelines on April 1.

Ernst & Young, TransCo's advisers, warned that the new computers should be tested for a minimum of four months to ensure shipments of gas could be matched to the right customers. But Mr Rees has been asked to say whether it is safe to proceed when the full system has been operational for just 3½ days.

Mr Moulson says it is just not worth the risk. He should know. His business has got it wrong twice before.

The real danger is that

TransCo will not be able to match the volumes pumped into the system by shippers with those billed to customers. TransCo wants Ofgas to ration the pace at which customers can switch suppliers so that it can verify meter readings.

If customers are left to take their own readings, the temptation to under-read when changing to lower-cost supplier might prove irresistible. There will inevitably be glitches in a list containing more than 18 million addresses. In fact, there is no particular reason why any of the first batch of gas bills that go out this autumn should be correct.

No light at end

of Eurotunnel

SO Eurotunnel would like a Stock Exchange inquiry into just who was playing ducks and drakes with its share price earlier this week. It could perhaps be filed next to the matching report from the Paris Bourse on who was rigging that market ahead of the 1994 rights issue.

Rather, it will not, because there

never was a firm conclusion reached by the Bourse, and there is going to be precious little action in London either.

Eurotunnel shares fell after rumours that the company was bust, which is curious because most of us had come to that conclusion years ago. The rumours spoke of imminent receivership, which was denied. This would have required the banks to write off large chunks of group debt, heading towards £9 billion and rising.

Those bankers are going to have to write off much of the debt anyway as part of whatever financial package emerges.

Eurotunnel's shares are like the cartoon character, running out of road and over a cliff, who

remains poised in mid-air for a while until he realises his plight and plummets to the ground. The impossibility of valuing the shares on any rational basis, rather than any organised market skulduggery, more likely explains the sharp gyrations in the price once the rumour mills started to grind. Investors, who have given up on any dividends and accepted they face heavy dilution, will want to know what will happen to their perks of free travel on the tunnel after the refinancing. This is the only real return they have seen, and to some it has proved an attractive one. The board has a duty to shareholders to ensure this, too, is not to be diluted.

In all this gloom, it is easy to overlook the project's achievements. The tunnel has meant a huge expansion for the cross-Channel market, pre-Christmas bookings running some 30 per cent ahead despite the franc fort.

Negotiations to create a new financial structure under which Eurotunnel can operate at a profit will be long and tortuous, with 200 banks and a healthy arbitrage market in that dis-

tressed debt to contend with. The Eurotunnel board will be aided, paradoxically, by the implied threat of receivership if they fall.

**Savoyards stake
their claim**

WHILE the City may be holding fire, one interested party has already taken firm sides in the Granada/Forte scuffle. The Savoy Group would prefer Forte to emerge as the victor.

That view is understandable if self-serving. Granada has said Forte's stake in the hotelier is one of the underperforming assets first out of the door if it wins and is already talking to buyers. One of these, if it is accepted, is Prince al-Waleed, the Saudi saviour of Euro Disney and Canary Wharf.

While the Prince might be regarded as a relatively benign purchaser, his arrival or that of any other mega-millionaire can only mean one thing: the end of the Savoy as an independent entity. He would be required to make a formal offer for the rest; in any case, no future owner is going to want most of the share capital but

a minority of the votes. The guard at the Savoy held off Forte for the best part of two decades because there were limits to what he, as head of a pub company, could push through his shareholders. The Prince, however, will merely throw sufficient cash at those Swiss funds with swinging shareholdings until they sell out.

By contrast, Forte's plans if survived are to distribute shares to its own investors *pro rata*, so giving the Savoyards the best of both worlds, a wider shareholder base but continuing control through the B share.

This is simply not on. Now is the time for that archive-split-share structure to be dismantled, or least for the board to start moving in this direction. That structure masks the true value of the money widely held A shares, making it more difficult for Forte investors to weigh the Granada offer against their board's intention.

Magic formula

THE Saatchi & Saatchi agency has marked the first anniversary of the split with the brothers' robust fashion. "It's true, the 'magic' left Saatchi & Saatchi January 11th 1995," a corporate brochure admits, referring to one of the bloodiest days for major defections. "As usual, it came back at 9.30am the following morning."

"Swifter action would have been preferable. Sainsbury often criticised as not reacting quickly enough and this is another example. On balance it is good news but it could have been better."

Mr Sainsbury will be executive chairman in charge of strategy, with the two other executives reporting directly to him. The company also announced that David Quarmby, joint managing director, will be responsible for business development. Sainsbury's is looking internally and externally for a candidate to fill the second chief executive post.

The retailer is due to announce a trading statement at the end of January, with analysts widely expecting cautious and revealing its market share. Sainsbury shares fell 1p to 385p.

Member HSBC

Sainsbury chief's role split to bolster grocery business

By SARAH BAGNALL

J SAINSBURY, the supermarket group that completed a restructuring last April, were suspended at 11.5p at the company's request after it emerged that a reverse takeover is in the pipeline (writes Philip Pangalos).

United, which has an estate of 140 mostly tenanted pubs in London, the Home Counties and Thames Valley, said it is in advanced talks which, if successful, will lead to the acquisition of a company that owns and operates a public house estate of a similar size to its current one.

Industry experts expect United, which is capitalised at £11.1 million and is based in Buckingham, to merge with an unquoted pubs company based in a similar part of the country and with a largely tenanted estate.

executives because the UK supermarket business is a very substantial part of the group and we need to have the chief executive totally focused on the business." The UK supermarket business accounts for about 80 per cent of group sales. Mr Adriano, 52, takes over his new post at the end of 1997. In the interim, Tony Vyner, joint managing director, will hold it with Mr Adriano as his deputy.

Analysts welcomed Mr Adriano's appointment but were disappointed by the two-year delay. Tony MacNeary, an analyst at NatWest Securities, said: "The disappointment is that Vyner is staying on so long. Typically for the business, which is conservative and plodding, it's a slow step in the right direction."

Philip Dorgan, an analyst at Strauss Turnbull, agreed:

"Mr Sainsbury said: 'We have decided to have two chief

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United pub merger deal near

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Dixons disappoints with 41% rise at half time

By SARAH BAGNALL

DIXONS, the electrical stores group, yesterday revealed a smaller than expected rise in interim profits and a Christmas trading statement that dampened market confidence in the retail sector.

Pre-tax profits rose 41 per cent to £37.5 million in the 28 weeks to November 11. Analysts' forecasts had clustered around the £25 million to £38 million mark but in the run-up to Christmas a couple of stockbrokers had pushed up their forecasts to £44 million.

Although analysts' predictions for the half year proved over-optimistic, most maintained their full-year forecasts of about £135 million. Disappointment at the size of the increase in the interim dividend contributed to a 14½p fall in the share price to 409½p.

The company said sales in the first eight weeks of the second half, which include Christmas, were up 23 per cent overall and 10 per cent on a like-for-like basis. The advances were fuelled by strong sales of personal computers. Dixons said gross margins were similar to last year. The first half saw strong

sales from each of the group's four retail operations: Dixons, Currys, PC World and The Link, the communications specialist.

The 350 Dixons stores lifted sales by 11 per cent to £262 million. A refurbishment programme helped lift like-for-like sales 9 per cent. Before refurbishment the stores were recording like-for-like sales declines of about 2 per cent.

Currys sales rose 15 per cent

to £164 million, while like-for-like sales advanced 10 per cent. Dixons is moving Currys to out-of-town sites. It has 199 out-of-town superstores and sees room for a total of 250. Of the 182 high street Currys stores, up to 100 will close as they fail to meet profit targets or fall into the catchment areas of new superstores.

The interim dividend, due on March 4, was lifted 14 per cent to 2.05p. Earnings were 5.9p a share, up 59 per cent.

Tempus, page 26

Seven new stores lifted the total to 21, and there are plans to open a further 30 over the next couple of years.

The Link made its first contribution to sales, with the 32 stores achieving turnover of £6 million.

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STOCK MARKET



MICHAEL CLARK

London catches a cold as New York freezes

THE arctic conditions that have brought Wall Street almost to a standstill this week, swept through the London stock market yesterday and share prices fell sharply.

An overnight sell-off that saw the Dow Jones industrial average tumble almost 70 points and evidence of further selling when trading resumed in New York last night sealed London's fate.

Behind the losses on Wall Street is the failure to resolve the deadlock over the US federal budget. After such a strong run of late, it was inevitable that share prices were vulnerable.

At one stage, the FTSE 100 index was down almost 40 points, having had to contend with a gloomy set of economic figures showing Britain's trade gap with the rest of world widening to its worst since December 1992.

In the event, the index closed above its worst, 28.8 down at 3,671.5, with brokers in London banking, perhaps forlornly, on an early rally on Wall Street. By the close of total of 777 million shares had changed hands.

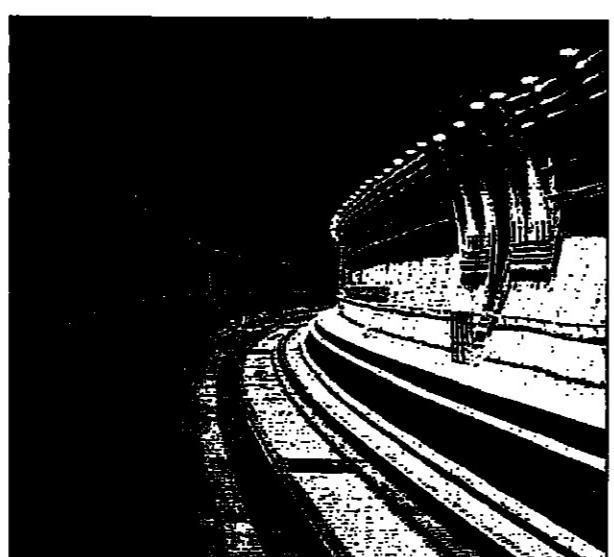
It was inevitable that the battle between Granada and Forte should continue to dominate investors' attention. But there was no sign of the widely predicted dawn raid by Granada on Forte.

One company caught in the crossfire this week is Whitbread, which fell further to 675p, for a two-day deficit of 23p. Whitbread has agreed to buy Forte's roadside operations, including Travelodge, Welcome Break and Happy Eater, for £1.05 billion. The deal is dependent on Forte resisting Granada's £3 billion final offer.

As a result, the news that sales and profits at Whitbread during the Christmas season were in line with expectations and ahead of last year was largely ignored. Beer volumes were significantly up and the take-home trade enjoyed a strong performance.

Yesterday the Forte share price rose 9p to 360p on turnover of more than 48 million shares. Brokers began taking the view that this week's improved terms from Granada might be enough to tip the battle in its favour.

At one stage, ABN Amro Hoare Govett, Granada's broker, was said to have bid 360p for a block of five million shares. But it is unlikely the



Eurotunnel was back on track on holiday trade reports

purchase was made on behalf of Granada, which climbed 16p to 653p.

Sainsbury lost an early 10p lead to finish 10p cheaper at 388p following confirmation of a series of management changes. Brokers expressed disappointment with the changes, which saw David Sainsbury holding on to both roles of chairman and chief

from the City, leaving the shares 18p down at 406p. A 46 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £38.9 million was in line with most forecasts. Brokers are predicting a final outcome of between £125 million and £135 million for the full year.

Next failed to make the best of a profits upgrade by BZW and a bumper set of sales figures in the run-up to Christ-

BUT, France's fourth largest electrical retailer, Kingfisher is buying the shares from Anfie Venturini, BUT's founder, and will speak for almost 15 per cent of the votes. Kingfisher already owns Darty, the leading French electrical retailer. Kingfisher ended 10p lower at 528p.

Eurotunnel managed to claw back Tuesday's losses with a rise of 7p to 84p after revealing it had made the most of holiday traffic over the festive season. Tourist traffic increased 21 per cent to 163,805 vehicles during December, although it meant a drop in freight-carrying vehicles.

Fewer trains were run because of the French public workers' strikes.

The group is expected to announce soon that 1995 sales will top £275 million. The current year shows a 50 per cent rise.

Campbell & Armstrong, the building specialist, rose 4p to 20p. Highland Electronics has topped up its holding with the purchase of a further 335,518 shares, raising its total to 2.5 million, or 17.3 per cent. City speculators are hoping the next move will be a full bid for the company.

Azora Computer was a firm market, adding 25p at 238p on news of a development agreement. The group has struck a deal with Oracle to develop reference designs for a series of network computing products.

GILT-EDGE: Worries over the US federal budget deadlock continue to cast a shadow over world bond markets. Even so, bonds in London underperformed compared with other European markets.

At one stage the March series of the Long Gilt threatened to test the important £110 resistance level, but later reduced its deficit to finish £1.12 down on the session at £110.42. A total of 62,000 contracts were completed.

In the cash market, benchmark Treasury 8 per cent 2013 finished a couple of ticks lower at £102.12, while at the shorter end Treasury 8 per cent 2000 lost a similar amount at £104.16.

NEW YORK: Shares on Wall Street stayed weak in the wake of Tuesday's fall, though leading high-tech stocks regained some strength. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was 5,098.33, down 33.80 points.

Kingfisher plans to splash out almost £60 million on buying a 20 per cent stake in

executive. There had been hopes that Dino Adriano would be appointed chief executive.

The other supermarket chains lost ground in line with the rest of the market. Asda slipped 1p to 10p, Argyl 9p to 33p, Kwik Save 3p to 50p, and Tesco 7p to 29p.

Half-year figures from Dixons, the electrical good retailer, received a cool reception

mas, with the price falling 15p to 438p. Sales during the autumn rose 13 per cent, with sales at the Next Directory 17 per cent ahead of the previous year.

Asda was impressed with Next's performance and raised its forecast for the full year by an extra £4 million to £122 million.

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the City, leaving the shares 18p down at 406p. A 46 per cent rise

**THE
TIMES**
**CITY
DIARY**

Sweet and sour**— with ice**

ANALYSTS fighting their way to work today through New York's snow storm will be doing so with dread in their hearts. Bloomberg's second annual survey of the 25 worst analysts on Wall Street is now out, and senior partners will be scouring the lists for names.

Last year, the survey, published in *Financial World*, America's oldest business magazine, only listed the "worst 25" analysts; hence it was dubbed the Lemon List. This year, the 25 best analysts and 20 brokerage houses are also ranked, hence it is dubbed the Sweet and Sour list.

It is bitter sweet for telecoms equipment analyst Therese Murphy — last year's No 1 Lemon. FW reports that she is not on any list this year "because she was the 26th worst performer". FW further notes that another on the 1995 Lemon List "is no longer in equity research".

Supply-side hitch

THEIR is a thoughtful touch to the invitation to today's wedding of Jenny Tora, senior fund manager at IAI International, the US fund management side of Hill Samuel and Nick Antill. BZW's head of oil sales/research. Bidding their friends to a champagne reception at Trinity House, where the musically versed Jenny has arranged a tenor to sing, they write, "we have been together for some years. At last count we had four ironing boards, four electric kettles and several toasters and feel a car boot sale might be the only solution to our over-supply situation. So please, don't buy us a wedding present. Instead, treat yourself or loved one or make a donation to a favourite charity." Here's hoping none of the toasters packs up.

**Flood of offers**

HERE'S enterprise for you. After Noah, the Islington antiques and furniture emporium, is having a sale. Everything, except beds and a few selected items, has been marked down 10 per cent. On items over £10, shoppers can elect to toss a coin — heads secures you 15 per cent off. Tails you lose, and get only 5 per cent off.

Over-qualified

MICHELE BRADLEY, a partner specialising in commercial property at law firm Forsythe Saunders Kerman, was asked by *The Lawyer* magazine to recall her most embarrassing moment. "Shortly after I was made partner, I attended a major lease-negotiating meeting. The other sides' solicitors ushered me into the wrong room and interviewed me for a job as a trainee solicitor. I didn't get it, she reveals.

I HAVE sad news for the 500 people in Britain who are shareholders in Malaysia Mining Corporation. They had better start brushing up on their Malay. After 20 years of maintaining a branch register in the UK and a listing on the London Stock Exchange, the register is closing and the listing is being terminated on January 31.

COLIN CAMPBELL

The European drive to hit Maastricht deficit targets threatens to throw UK exports off course

The storm clouds are gathering over Europe, but Britain seems oblivious. Our great leaders have been practically everywhere else, in mind and body. Michael Portillo has been carrying the Euro-sceptic standard and a grudge against Emma Nicholson from the United Arab Emirates to the Philippines and Japan. Tony Blair just managed to get out of Japan in time to miss Mr Portillo and gave Singapore his vision of a stakeholder society. Michael Howard was in Delhi, defending arms sales to Saudi Arabia. Kenneth Clarke was touring Latin America, touting for privatisation business for Britain's merchant bankers. Michael Heseltine was the nearest any of them got to the heart of Europe, slamming Mr Blair from the Italian holiday resort of Amalfi.

John Major, meanwhile, had his head in his fish pond in Huntingdon, trying to avoid the flak flying so wantonly around the world. In splendid isolation, he dutifully put out his now monthly message, warning his party to stop in-fighting, and launched his re-election campaign.

The message which is going to be rammed home repeatedly this year, is that the economy is shaping up nicely, that the pain is receding and that the British consumer is going to come back with a vengeance and win the election for the Conservatives.

The economic debate in Britain is now dominated by whether the Government is right to predict that consumer spending will increase by 3.5 per cent this year and help the Treasury to meet its target for economic growth of 3 per cent. The fact that the focus is almost entirely on whether the consumer beast will finally stir reflects on how near the election now might be. The Government is relying on the notion that consumer confidence will translate into votes.

But there is scarcely any debate about what will happen this year in the other sources of economic growth. Much has been written about the involuntary build-up of stocks in Britain last year and how quickly these will be run down so that healthy growth can resume. The stocks cycle should mean a very weak end of 1995 and beginning of 1996. Investment is still uncertain, with spending on plant and machinery looking reasonably healthy, but investment in construction looking very weak.

But possibly the most contentious area in Britain's trade performance. The Government is predicting growth in export volumes this year of 8.25 per cent, a better performance than the 6.5 per cent the Treasury estimates was achieved in 1995. Imports are expected to rise by 7.75 per cent, so leading to an overall improvement in Britain's visible trade deficit.

The major problem, as yesterday's trade figures showed, is that exports to Britain's key European export markets are faltering. Exports to Europe fell by 5.2 per cent in October largely because demand from Germany and the Benelux countries was weaker. Exports to Germany fell 6.5 per cent, while exports to the Benelux countries were down 10.4 per cent.

In the current political climate within the Conservative Party, it is understandable that potential prob-

ems

lems emanating from Europe are best brushed under the carpet as the woeing of the electorate begins in earnest. But, sooner or later, Europe will re-enter with a roar from stage left.

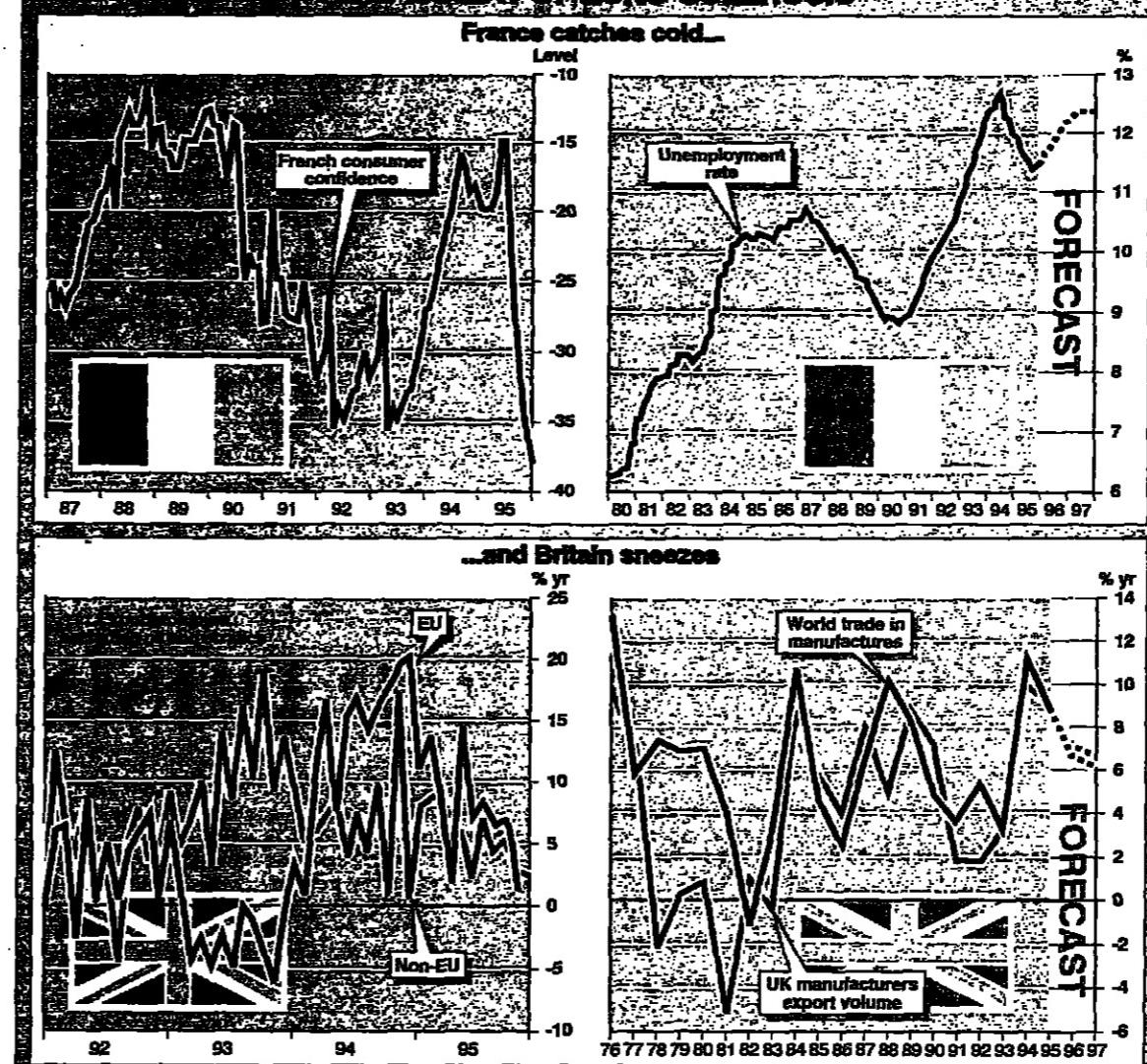
The inter-governmental conference on plans for European monetary union will probably start in the second half of the year and is a timebomb of which John Major is well aware. What is less recognised is the damaging impact on British exporters of the Maastrichtian stranglehold on continental European growth.

This is a Europe-wide phenomenon, but let us take France and Germany which, in recent years, have accounted for about one quarter of British export markets. The signs are ominous. Yesterday, there was news that French consumer confidence

had fallen to its lowest level since January 1987. On Tuesday, there was news of a 68,000 surge in German unemployment to 3.79 million and a jump of more than 19 per cent in company insolvencies in October against a year ago.

The DIW institute — admittedly always on the pessimistic side — predicted German growth of only 1 per cent this year and Helmut Schmidt, a former Chancellor, was moved to characterise Germany as a shackled Gulliver. "If we don't want conditions like in Rome, endless strikes like in Paris, class war like England, or a crippling of public services like the United States, then we must pull ourselves together in 1996," he opined with a tact that must infuriate the Lilliputians with which Germany means to share its destiny.

As Europe struggles to meet the Maastricht convergence criteria by the end of 1997, the risk is that growth will be dampened down to such an extent

France catches cold... and Britain sneezes

that unemployment will rise to even more politically unacceptable levels and that deficits, far from falling, may actually rise in some cases.

Last summer, Mike Dicks, European economist at JP Morgan in London, calculated the size of overall fiscal tightening needed in 14 European countries in order to hit Maastricht's deficit criterion and what the cost would be in growth and unemployment. He estimated that the average fiscal tightening — with no action presumed to be needed in Germany, Denmark, the Irish Republic and The Netherlands — would be equivalent to 1.9 per cent of gross domestic product. Growth, on average, would be cut by 2.6 per cent and unemployment would rise by 0.5 per cent. Germany, for all this week's

chest beating, is probably not in bad shape, with most economists predicting a recovery in growth in the second half of this year after a poor first half. The economics team at Lehman Brothers notes that Germany is planning tax cuts later this year for the low paid, a group that has a high marginal propensity to spend, and that domestic demand should also be boosted by higher wages.

France is the major worry. Jean Arthuis, France's Finance Minister, yesterday revised down his forecast for growth last year to 2.6 per cent from 2.9 per cent, but has thus far left his forecast for growth this year unchanged at 2.8 per cent. This is widely expected to be revised downwards, perhaps to 2.5 per cent, but most observers of France believe that this is hopelessly over-optimistic.

Mr Dicks has calculated that France would have to tighten fiscal policy overall by 1.1 per cent. This would cut growth by 1.2 per cent cumulatively and raise unemployment by 0.2 per cent. He now predicts that France may grow by as little as 1.25 per cent this year and that this could leave France's deficit as a percentage of GDP at 4.75 per cent this year and at 4 per cent in 1997, still above the 3 per cent required under Maastricht. He believes that it might take until 1999 for France to meet the deficit criteria.

There are many other sceptical voices. Julian Jessop, European economist with HSBC Markets, believes growth will amount to no more than 1.6 per cent and that the deficit will overshoot, even if the authorities stick to their guns on current deficit plans and stand firm in spite of rising unemployment. He and others, such as James Capel, see the rate of unemployment rising to 12 per cent this year, from 11.5 per cent in 1995.

French ministers may well decry this pessimism from the Euro-sceptic gnomes of London and they will almost certainly continue to pursue their painful Maastricht programme, destroying growth on the way. Having faced down the strikers, the mood is morose but determined and that means a hard, low growth grind for the foreseeable future.

There seems little hope of a big boost to growth from the US, Japan, or the rest of Europe. Some succour may appear in the form of lower interest rates, but with predictions of a gentle rise in German inflation later this year, the scope does not appear to be great as long as France, and others, remain committed to exchange-rate stability against the mark.

And what of our own sceptered isle? If consumer spending is really set to grow by 3.5 per cent, the worry must be that imports will start surging. Exports to key European markets are likely to struggle. No wonder that Messrs Howard, Clarke and Portillo are rooting for business across the non-European world stage.

Recent reports about the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund (PCPF) have left some MPs wondering if the fund can really be the one to which they subscribe. The suggestion that a uniform accrual rate of one fifth for each year of parliamentary service is "selfish" ignores the fact that any change in the fund's provisions must first be recommended by an independent review body. It is this body, not MPs, that has made the fund's accrual rate a priority for change.

Even so, the fund's managing trustees sought expert and impartial legal advice before accepting the review body's recommendation. That advice emphasised the expertise of the review body, its independence and that its recommendations must be treated by the trustees as reflecting "good current practice in pension schemes" — balancing the burden of contributions against the benefit of higher pensions."

To compare with the Civil Service scheme is wrong-headed. Not only is the parliamentary scheme a contributory one, it is one in which the member's contribution, at 9 per cent, was for long among the highest of any occupational pension scheme in Britain. This was the price demanded of MPs in 1983, by the then Prime Minister, to offset part of the cost of a review body's award on parliamentary pay.

There was no talk then of the reparative effects that level of member's contribution would have on others in public service. Listen to some of the "pension experts" and you would think that the pay of civil servants is abated by a "notional" 6 per cent to pay for their pensions. But it is a notion that nobody else now takes seriously, least of all Tony Newton, Leader of the Commons, who told the House when commenting on the parliamentary scheme on July 17: "...there is no getting away from the fact — nor do I seek to disguise it — that this is a Contributory Scheme and that the Civil Service Scheme is not."

(Hansard, col 416). Since parliamentary pay was for many years linked to that of a Civil Service grade, MPs must effectively have been paying a punitive 15 per cent of gross salary for their pensions when their scheme's contribution rate was 9 per cent.



Morris: "expert advice"

The leader concluded: "British MPs ... must be paid a better rate for their job." It might here be added that their pension fund should also be urgently reviewed, not least to provide a better deal for widows and other dependants of MPs who have died and for retired MPs whose claims have also been strongly and repeatedly pressed with the independent review body by the managing trustees.

To accuse MPs of wrongdoing when no wrong has been done is to undermine those who work to eradicate actual wrongdoing. In this instance it is also to invite those who manage the PCPF to ignore expert and impartial legal advice about their duties and responsibilities.

The Rt Hon Alfred Morris, AO QSO MP, is chairman of the managing trustees of the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund.

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Utilities, regulators and competition on a global scale

From Mr Michael R. Bond

Sir, In the issue of January 3 you refer to the need for the new chief executive of British Telecom to make peace with the regulator. It seems to me that it is the other way around. Far from regulating their respective industries, the regulators are trying to mould them in line with their own vision of how things ought to be and which, in most cases, is very different to the situation created by Parliament when the utilities were privatised.

The good news is that the Labour Party has recognised the need to look critically at the role of the regulators. It is a pity that the alleged party of business sees no need to do so.

Britain is open to all comers, the measure of competition should be on a global scale. As the figures you published before Christmas showed, on a global scale, British companies don't rate. They never will if they are continually being hamstrung by well-meaning members of the sashays every time they respond positively to the challenges put before them.

Yours faithfully
MICHAEL R. BOND,
119 High Street,
Cheshunt,
Cambridge.

Housing gloom

From Mr Alan Bardsley, Sir, Professional commentary on the housing market always seems to be divorced from reality (Halifax forecasts 2 per cent recovery, December 27). Building societies promote, and commentators still endorse, the boom of the 1970s, when house price inflation exceeded borrowing costs.

The actual market is trying to come to terms with housing as just another commodity. For any of the Halifax forecasts to come to fruition would be unfortunate. The concept of continuous real equity gain in a fixed asset is insupportable; we do not expect that in other fields.

The implication of a 10 per cent decline in turnover is still that 90 per cent of previous transactions are still going on. The vast majority must be contented and perhaps, with luck, we have lost the speculative element of the market. For the blame, the societies ought to look closer to home. Yours faithfully,

ALAN

BARDSLEY,

Cartref,

Church

Lane,

Gawsworth,

Macclesfield,

Cheshire.

Readers can send their letters to the Business and Finance section of *The Times* by fax on 0171-782 5112.

COLIN CAMPBELL

Ingham chief executive resigns

Alan Stephenson has resigned as chief executive of Ingham, the troubled mini-conglomerate that incurred a pre-tax loss of £1.07 million for the six months to September 30.

The company, which earned £867,000 before tax in the first half of the previous year, announced the sale of its loss-making worsted spinning business for a nominal sum. The sale will leave Ingham to focus on its UK classic car parts business.

Mr Stephenson, who became chief executive in August 1994, will remain a non-executive director.

Ingham intends to recommend proposals by potential investors, represented by SBC Warburg, which would involve a share subscription and a related pre-emptive invitation to existing shareholders at 30p a share.

Interim losses were 6.6p a share, compared with earnings of 3.2p. There is no interim payout (1.75p).

Ryland up

Ryland Group, the motor distribution and contract hire group, increased pre-tax profits to £15.5 million from £11.5 million in the half-year to October 31, on turnover that rose to £154.8 million from £118.1 million. Earnings were 3.55p a share (3.42p). There is an interim dividend of 1.17p a share (0.27p).

Society loan

Northern Rock Building Society has completed its biggest syndicated loan. As co-arranger with Banque Paribas, the society is lending £39 million of an £89 million total loan to fund the transfer of more than 5,000 homes from Rushmoor District Council to Rushmoor Housing Association in Hampshire.

Bell sells

Bell Cablemedia, the UK cable group, has sold its dormant Worcester franchise to TeleWest for £9.8 million. BCM Worcester holds the cable licences in an area next to TeleWest's Midlands franchise.



A shortage of suitable sites for new stores has forced Basil Taylor, chief executive, to seek new areas for expansion of the rapidly growing business

Troubled Rexam appoints two outsiders to top posts

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

REXAM, the troubled printing and packaging company formerly known as Bowater, has appointed two outsiders as chairman and chief executive.

Jeremy Lancaster, at present the chairman and chief executive of Wolsley, the building materials group, will become chairman in May when Mike Woodhouse retires. However, he will join the board immediately as vice-chairman.

Rolf Borjesson, chief executive of PLM, the Swedish packaging company, will succeed David Lyon as managing director and chief executive in July. Mr Lyon will continue as a director for an additional 12 months.

The City was pleased with the appointments, which end 18 months of uncertainty over the succession. Rexam's share price rose 2p to close at 382p. Mr Woodhouse said: "Together,

these appointments offer the prospect of a most exciting and fulfilling future for Rexam, its employees, and shareholders."

Rexam has lost 40 per cent

of its market value in the past six months after two profit warnings in the autumn. The 1995 figures are expected to be 20 per cent below 1994.

The collapse in the share

price cost Rexam its place in

the FT-SE 100 and has made it

a potential bid target. The

recent rise in the share price,

from a low of 327p in Decem-

ber, has been fuelled by mar-

ket rumours of a takeover.

However, Alusuisse, the Swiss

metals and packaging com-

pany at the centre of many of

the rumours, has publicly

denied any interest in Rexam.

The new management will

face a difficult task in rebuild-

ing Rexam's share price to a sufficient level to ward off bid threats from companies that see it as a cheap way into the high-margin paper and pack-

aging business. But customer

restocking, one of the main

factors behind Rexam's de-

cline last year, seems to be

slowing and analysts expect

an improvement in 1996.

Mr Lancaster, 59, who is

also a non-executive director

of Tomkinsons and Kleinwort Benson Group, has been head of Wolsley since 1976. Last year, the group posted record profits of £245 million on turnover of £3.7 billion.

Mr Borjesson, 53, has been chief executive of PLM since 1987. PLM is owned by Industrivarven, the Swedish investment group, and is to be floated soon at a market value of about £380 million.

M&W steps up security as shop crime increases

BY MARTIN BARROW

M&W, the convenience store operator, said that the level of retail crime has become a major concern. The company also complained of "a marked unwillingness" to prosecute or deal effectively with shoplifters.

Basil Taylor, chief executive, said: "Even more worryingly we have noticed increased levels of violent crime often involving relatively small sums of money."

"The company has consequently needed to invest heavily in increasingly sophisticated security systems involving video surveillance, alarms and time delay devices and we have taken all practicable security measures to protect our customers, our staff and our stores."

M&W, which is based in Southampton, has grown rapidly and now operates 163 outlets, principally in southern England. However, a shortage of suitable sites for new stores has prompted the

company to consider other areas.

M&W yesterday reported profits of £2.66 million before tax for the year to October 1, against £2.61 million in the previous 12 months. Michael Weston, chairman, said competition remained strong, with other retailers opening longer hours in the hope of increasing market share. M&W lifted like-for-like sales by 2.64 per cent, excluding lottery sales.

Mr Taylor said the impact of the National Lottery on operating profits had been broadly neutral. About one-half of the company's stores are agents for the lottery and sell scratchcards, and these had benefited from an increase in customer flows. But this had been offset by a decline in business at stores that did not offer the lottery.

Earnings rose to 10.89p a share from 10.64p. There is a final dividend of 2.25p, making 3.5p (3.25p).

Vibroplant quits US with sale of American Hi-Lift

BY PHILIP PANGALOS

VI BROPLANT, the specialist plant hire group, is making an exit from the United States with the disposal of its American Hi-Lift subsidiary to Primeco Inc in a deal worth about \$68.8 million.

American Hi-Lift, which specialises in the sale and hire of aerial lift equipment, is being sold for \$46.5 million. However, Primeco has also agreed to discharge American Hi-Lift's bank debt of about \$22.3 million.

The disposal news helped shares in Vibroplant, which was only capitalised at £34.2 million prior to the US sale news, buck the gloomy market trend with a 7p rise to 81p.

The deal is conditional on shareholder approval, an environmental audit to be carried out by Primeco and US government approval under US anti-trust legislation.

Jeremy Pilkington, Vibroplant's chairman and chief executive, said the good sale

price achieved was helped by "a good strong shortlist of interested parties". The proceeds from the US sale will be used to wipe out Vibroplant's borrowings, leaving the group with about £20 million net cash to fund future growth.

The Hi-Lift business, which has 18 branches across the US, made pre-tax profits of £2.3 million in the six months to September 30, on turnover of £15.4 million but only £14 million pre-tax profits in the year to March 31. It had net assets of £20.3 million at the last year end on March 31.

Mr Pilkington, whose family controls 51.3 per cent of Vibroplant's equity, said: "The

consideration realised for American Hi-Lift represents a significant premium over net assets. The proceeds from the sale will enable the company to focus on growth opportunities in the UK."

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Costing liability in a new light

Nick Atkins looks at a judgment with far-reaching implications for auditors of company accounts



ADRIAN BROOKS
difference between the price paid by ADT (£105 million) and the notional price that someone knowing of the audit deficiencies would have been prepared to pay for BSG (£40 million).

Subject to the outcome of Binder Hamlyn's appeal, the lessons for auditors are all too clear. The decision will certainly end any complacency over Caparo ending the threat of auditors being required to pick up the whole tab when a purchaser claims it relied on negligently audited accounts.

As Binder Hamlyn found to its great cost, it is all too easy for an auditor to be held to have assumed a legal responsibility to a third party for his audit.

If asked about audited accounts by a third party, the safe courses are to decline to say anything or to issue a clear disclaimer of liability before answering. It would also be wise for the response to be recorded, preferably in a letter to the third party.

That said, in the real world, a purchaser may well insist on a direct assurance from the auditor of the target company before going ahead. The auditor is likely to be under pressure by his client to give the assurance. Further claims against auditors by disappointed purchasers are inevitable.

The author is a partner in Lovell White Durrant

Seeking a reasonable inside check on fraud

IT IS ironic. For years, company directors have berated auditors for not taking specific responsibility for detecting fraud. The auditors have wriggled on the hook. They know that if they said that fraud detection was one of their duties every time a company suffered from fraud it would be the auditors, yet again, who would be sued.

If directors were so worried about fraud, one would presume they would have installed systems to combat its likelihood. Not so. A survey by Ernst & Young of the UK top 500 companies showed that "almost 40 per cent of the companies interviewed have no internal audit function".

Small wonder that Ian Plaistowe, chairman of the Auditing Practices Board, was so ebullient earlier this week when he unveiled analysis of the responses the board received to its most recent paper. This had discussed the effectiveness of internal financial controls and had followed in the wake of the APB's guidance. In the words of Philip Ashton of Price Waterhouse, who is now in charge of the APB's internal control efforts, this had gone "within a whisker of insisting directors had to report on the effectiveness of internal controls".

The responses show that this panicked directors up and down the country. "It is a great step forward," Plaistowe said. "Companies are now making sure they have effective internal controls." This is a remarkable statement. It must have seemed obvious that in a sophisticated corporate environment companies would have pretty effective systems for ensuring that everything was working properly. But they did not.

A simple suggestion that directors should state in their report and accounts to shareholders that they have an effective system of internal financial controls has resulted in corporate worlds being turned upside down. The picture is one of company chairmen phoning finance directors to ask about the health of the internal audit department only to find the last tranche of delayering they ordered had abolished it.

Now, the important issue is of "effective" and quite how wide is the whisker that Ashton talked about. This could take time. Far better to try another track. And that is what the APB is seeking to do.

Plaistowe argued that to ask auditors to report on how "effective" a system of internal

control would only create another expectations gap. Auditors would certify one system effective and then find that it broke down a week after the year-end. They would get sued again. Auditors are tired of being sued and will try to avoid it at all costs.

So a wording has been created and the hopes are that it will become best practice. The example the APB put forward is that used by the BOC Group. In a lengthy section in the directors' report the system of internal control is outlined and the areas to which it applies detailed. The directors then state that the system provides "reasonable but not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions are authorised and recorded properly and that material errors and irregularities are either prevented or would be detected within a timely period".

The latest accounts of Hanson provide another variant. The section on internal financial control concludes with the sentence "Internal financial control, by its nature, provides only reasonable and not absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss."

The key is the phrase "reasonable and not absolute". This formula is seen as the one which is likely to provide a way forward. It will keep directors on the straight and narrow without forcing them to say something definitive which they might regret. And it allows auditors to review the systems, but not have to give any authoritative ruling. In the words of Plaistowe: "We rather like the look of it."

If the idea takes off, the boot may well be on the other foot when it comes to auditors, who are still reluctant to commit themselves. Of the 13 accounting firms that responded to the discussion paper, only Touche Ross was deemed to be "supportive of auditors' attestation on effectiveness". Eight were opposed. But companies that are taking the "reasonable but not absolute" route will decide that if they have done the work then auditors should provide the other side of the bargain.

Talking to Tony Isaac, BOC's finance director, it became obvious that this was an objective. "I don't have a problem with the auditors commenting on internal control," he said. As far as he could see, it was now the auditors who had problems. And that was down to what he called "the litigation cloud over the whole profession".

This lady's ready for returning

IT IS the season for in-fighting and skulduggery at the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. Nominations for the election of the next vice-president were fought over at last weekend's council conference. The likely hats in the ring are the thoroughly decent sole practitioner, Michael Groom, the ebullient and substantial figure of BDO Stoy Hayward partner, Chris Swanson, and the austere Sheila Masters of

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

More thoughts

THE retirement from Coopers & Lybrand of insolvency guru, David Graham QC, has not meant an end to his interest in the more unsavoury aspects of financial behaviour. He is researching the history of insolvency law. In the latest issue of Coopers' journal, *Phoenix*, he has provided some nuggets. In particular, Thomas More's account in 1513 of the abuse of the law of sanctuary. Church

gave sanctuary but found that "malicious heinous traitors" ran to them with other people's money and goods and spent the lot having "bidden their creditors goe whistle them". And they say things have changed.

Name game

THE ICA council conference made progress on regulating the profession. But it has name problems. Given regulators are

Unplanned lunch

EVEN printing goblins are becoming cynical these days. In my column last week, I appeared to have suggested that senior partners should offer clients "the benefit of a pre-sent lunch". This should have read "a present lunch". Though come to think of it...

ROBERT BRUCE



ROBERT
BRUCE

M&W steps up security as shoplifting increases

THE TIMES THURSDAY JANUARY 11 1996

UNIT TRUST PRICES 29

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■ FILM 1

Paul Verhoeven's flesh-filled *Showgirls* proves to be a tacky and pointless folly



■ FILM 2

... but Carl Franklin's *Devil in a Blue Dress* is an evocative thriller set in 1940s Los Angeles



THE TIMES ARTS



■ FILM 3

In the overblown *The War*, Kevin Costner plays the Vietnam vet drawn into battles closer to home



■ FILM 4

... while *Run of the Country*, with Albert Finney, is a woolly tale of Irish romance

CINEMA: Geoff Brown makes his excuses and leaves as the *Showgirls* show how unsexy wall-to-wall nudity can be

This too, too sullied flesh

Hollywood lunacy scaled a new peak back in November 1992 when Charles Evans, a producer, property developer and co-founder of a sportswear empire, paid \$2 million—in cash, no less—for the kernel of a film called *Showgirls*. No script existed, but there was an idea burning inside the head of Joe Eszterhas, the town's most expensive scribe, which he outlined to Evans in a reported four minutes. No stars were attached to his notion of a raunchy rock musical set in Las Vegas, but there was a hope—just a hope—that Paul Verhoeven, Eszterhas's director on *Basic Instinct*, might be interested.

Last year Hollywood lunacy scaled an even greater peak when the film was unveiled, almost proudly, with an NC-17 certificate: the first mainstream product to be widely released with the adult rating most American producers fight desperately to avoid. For what had that money, and that controversy, bought? Just a hoary yarn, as old as *42nd Street* or *A Star is Born*, about a hot, grasping girl called Nomi, played by Elizabeth Berkley, an actress plucked from nowhere, to which she will probably return.

Nomi begins as a lowly stripper. She has sex in a pool with Kyle MacLachlan, the Diabolique of Las Vegas, toys vaguely with lesbian affections, and encourages Gina Gershon, the town's reigning diva, to fracture a hip by falling down stairs. By the end, of course, she is the Strip's main attraction, spewing out of a volcano in a tasteful show called *Goddess*.

Verhoeven's treatment only makes the crude comedy, limping drama and threadbare characters worse. No shred of subtlety clings to his images. He is out to ogle flesh. There is plenty of razzmatazz and gold lame, but no heart, not even a faint erotic tingle as portions of the female anatomy jiggle or strut before us. Nomi, like all the showgirls, uses her body as a commodity. This is also the film-makers'

Showgirls
Odeon West End
18, 131 mins
Miserable garish folly

Devil in a Blue Dress
Curzon West End
15, 101 mins
Atmospheric thriller

The War
Empire 2, 12, 125 mins
Sinister fable with Kevin Costner and kids

The Run of the Country
Odeon Haymarket
15, 100 mins
Faded blarney with Albert Finney

approach; and it seems particularly mean of the script to single out a fictional rock star, one Andrew Carver, as Las Vegas's brute male when the species overflows on both sides of the camera.

"This picture," Eszterhas trilled in the pages of *Variety*, "will absolutely be on the cutting edge of contemporary musicals." But even as a musical *Showgirls* fails, David Stewart, late of the Eurythmics, presides over a soundtrack that pummels the ears without benefit, while the dance moves, mixed in with much writhing and fondling, are too repetitive and absurd to make the snake shake.

All told *Showgirls* is a miserable folly: a strenuous attempt at a big, bold movie that both bores your brain and numbs your feelings. If you stay the course until the final credits, you will be informed that "Animal action was monitored by the American Humane Association. No animal was harmed in the making of this film." Cheering news, I suppose, but what about the humans who watch it?

At times in *Devil in a Blue Dress*, a superbly atmospheric adaptation of Walter Mosley's crime novel, you also feel your sensitivities under attack. A character like Mouse, side-kick to Denzel Washington's

amateur detective Easy Rawlins, is a trigger-happy psycho; yet, in the hands of actor Don Cheadle, his portrayal is light and sympathetic. Should we really find this human keg of dynamite so amusing?

Carl Franklin's film, a belated successor to his excellent first feature *One False Move*, has other trouble spots. Such as Jennifer Beals, the devil in a blue dress herself. A femme fatale should have some magnetic allure, but Beals's weak performance as Daphne Monet, the white girl and politician's friend that Easy is hired to find, suggests someone who would have difficulties attracting a fly.

Since Daphne lies at the mystery's centre, the damage is not insignificant. But so much else in the film is beautifully realised. Franklin and production designer Gary Frutkoff evoke the time and place—1948, Los Angeles—with a loving care that never degenerates into a fussy accretion of period props. Tak Fujimoto's camera roams the manicured lawns, banks in the glaring sun, and dives into bustling night spots.

Rawlins faces marriage problems when he loses his job in an aircraft factory. Offered \$100 to locate Monet, he jumps to it, only to find corpses, police and politicians collecting round his feet.

Helped by Washington's wary performance as the ordinary Joe plunged into deep water, Franklin finds much quirky humour in the tale. But this is always entertainment with a thoughtful undertow. Easy's search for Daphne takes him across LA's class and ethnic barriers, yet the film still gives the impression of unfolding in a golden age before urban decay took hold.

After cooking up *Fried Green Tomatoes*, producer-turned-director Jon Avnet has found a few more scraps of Southern charm to put into *The War*. They do not make a very nourishing meal.

The time is 1970, the place Mississippi. Family man Kevin Costner has returned from Vietnam with some vi-



Gina Gershon and Elizabeth Berkley in *Showgirls*, a "strenuous attempt at a big, bold movie that bores your brain and numbs your feelings"

cious chest stiches and signs of mental trauma. He keeps losing jobs but, as he blandly tells his son Elijah Wood, "so long as we got hope, there's always a chance".

There's always a Southern accent, too. Costner's is ill-suited, but it is more understandable than some of the children's. And it is on the children that the film's story ultimately rests. Young Wood, impressive as usual, leads the offspring in building a tree house, which comes under attack from a family of louts. Another war, therefore, is fought alongside Costner's tortured memories of Vietnam, and one that grows to preposterous dimensions. Avnet and his players manage a few affecting moments, but so much here is overblown, like the new, racist schoolteacher in her bright pink dress. She exists in the script only to be

knocked down. What did you do in *The War, Daddy?* I groaned, my pet, and looked at my watch.

Much the same happened with *The Run of the Country*, a tepid and woolly-headed Irish drama from the pen of Sham Connaughton, author of *My Left Foot*. Let the production notes explain: "*The Run of the Country* is a story of love: love between a boy and a girl, between father and son, and love for Ireland." Abstract ideas outnumber dynamic events by about ten to one, and you almost despair of getting involved in the coming and goings of 17-year-old Danny, his wild chum Prunty, and the girl just north of the border who wins Danny's heart.

Despite passing references to the Troubles, the IRA and the SAS, time seems to have passed this film by. Life goes on as it might have in the 1950s, and the stale feeling is enhanced by Albert Finney, playing his third movie Irishman in three years. As the stern, widowed Garda sergeant struggling with a teenage son, Finney lends some much-needed force to a drooping film. But his acting in capital letters, and it scarcely boosts an authenticity already imperilled by the casting of an earnest, picture-postcard American, Matt Keeslar, as Danny.

The landscapes, at least, are the genuine article, and the director makes the most of them. His name? Peter Yates, lurching somewhat in a bizarre transatlantic career that has already encompassed the Royal Court Theatre, *Bullit*, *Cliff Richard*, *Tom Selleck* and *Cher*. Whatever next?

"Sassy, sexy movie-making... Franklin's long-awaited follow-up to 'One False Move' doesn't disappoint."

Tom Charity, TIME OUT

"Jazzy and elegantly assured detective drama."

Angie Errigo, PREMIERE

DENZEL WASHINGTON



DEVIL IN A BLUE DRESS

CONCERTS: Joan Rodgers excels in a memorable vocal series; and a fine choir delves into 16th-century rarities

A Russian debt paid in full

TICK TOCK, TICK TOCK, went Britten's piano accompaniment to Pushkin's poem, *Lines written during a sleepless night*. Then, suddenly and quietly, a faint chiming began, as Pushkin's own clock joined in, striking midnight and, it seemed, ever more, until the song had ended."

This anecdote, recalled by Peter Pears in the journal he kept during his visit with

Benjamin Britten to Pushkin's birthplace in 1965, has become a little emblem of the composer's relationship with Russia, the subject of the penultimate evening in the Wigmore Hall's revelatory Britten Song Series, which began last September.

music he was to write for the human voice. Joan Rodgers eloquently recreated the passion and the pain of the ignored artist in the cycle.

To hear Rodgers in the Russian song repertoire which framed the Britten was to enjoy a sophisticated, highly intelligent and flawlessly artistic presentation of a literature deep under her linguistic skin. The Mussorgsky cycle, *The Nursery*, was sung with bright-eyed but discreet characterisation. This was a Russian storybook read in an essentially English nursery. Her Tchaikovsky, too, came to life as vivid, heightened speech, the words of *At the Ball* dancing gladly through the line with Malcolm Martineau's piano playing, and the modal contours of *Was I not a little blade of grass* as full and free as unaccompanied folk song.

The original quartet of James Bowman, Pears, John

Shirley-Quirk and Britten was, of course, something of a hard act to follow both for Tuesday's singers and for those of us in the audience who saved up their holiday money to buy a student ticket for the great occasion 25 years ago.

But some of the same thrill remained: the chill of those ice-glazed repetitions of the "cold coming" in the voices' close harmony; the hallucinatory quality of the night journey to the Birth which was to be a Death; the tug of Britten's *tant notes* against Eliot's sturdy words.

The fourth canticle was matched by Britten's second, *Abraham and Isaac*, given powerful dramatic presence by Chance and Thompson; and framed by two *Mörike Lieder* of Hugo Wolf and a lilting, valedictory *Die siele Christi* by Heinrich Schütz, following on from the canticle without a break, just as it had done in Aldeburgh.

HILARY FINCH

Sheppard leads the way

**Tallis Scholars
St John's**

known for its recording of music by continental composers such as Josquin and Palestrina, its sound is perhaps most readily associated with English sacred polyphony, and notably those stratospheric treble lines (beautifully sung by Deborah Roberts and Ruth Holton).

This was certainly the case in the Sheppard mass setting, although there were quite extended passages for the lower voices alone, in which the equally excellent basses Francis Steele and Donald Greig shone. On first hearing, the *Mass Cantate* is clearly a fine piece, but the perfor-

mance seemed at times tentative.

The singers were clearly at home with Tallis's *Lamentations* (thought to have been composed early in the reign of Elizabeth I), and gave a magnificient account of them. That Sheppard was capable of composing in a direct, expressive vein was clear from his poignant setting of *In manus tuas*, while White's extended account of the *Miserere* confirmed that in England, as on the Continent, penitential texts drew something very special from composers of church music in the Renaissance.

There is more Sheppard. White, Tallis, Tyre, Parsons, Mundy, Fairfax and Cornish later in the season.

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Chance and circumstance can shape even the greatest of men, Ian McIntyre finds in a new biography of America's 16th President

A whimsical but enduring convention of biographical writing decrees that authors should profess remorse at what they have inflicted on their families in the course of their unending researches. "For Aida and Bruce," writes David Herbert Donald, "who have had to live with Lincoln for most of their lives."

One feels for them. Lincoln's secretaries may have revered him as "a backwoods Jupiter", but the 16th President of the United States, a shambolic and uncouth man, was only minimally house-trained. The voice was high and piercing. He was addicted to puns and to stories that were every bit as tall as the famous stove-pipe hat into which he frequently stuck correspondence and documents.

In male company the tone of his anecdotes could veer from the folksy to the scatological. A centurion on Lyndon Johnson would certainly have slapped his thigh at the one about the English family who kept a picture of George Washington in their lavatory. "Most appropriate," countered their American guest. "There is

Masterly work made from a piece of folly

LINCOLN
By David Herbert Donald
Jonathan Cape, £20

nothing that will make an Englishman shit so quick as the sight of Gen'l Washington."

And yet make an interesting narrative of Lincoln's first 50 years would test the skills of a Scheherazade. "Why Scripps," Lincoln said to a journalist keen to write his campaign biography, "it is a great piece of folly to attempt to make anything of my early life." It could, he said, be condensed into one sentence from *Gray's Elegy*— "The short and simple annals of the poor."

Boldly — possibly rashly — Donald disregards this guidance from the horse's mouth about how to handle the tedious years as carpenter and riverboat man, soldier and postmaster, blacksmith

and surveyor. He also acknowledges that he has devoted more attention than some earlier biographers to Lincoln's "brain-numbing labor" in his law practice; in consequence we are over a third of the way into this long book before he reaches Washington as President-elect.

From 1860 the pace quickens. Within weeks of his election every state of the lower South had taken steps towards secession. Initially Lincoln seemed totally unable to make things go right. Early in 1862 things looked so desperate that he contemplated for the first time the prospect of Confederate success, and spoke of "the bare possibility of our being two nations".

Donald is a highly fastidious biographer: "In tracing the life of Abraham Lincoln, I have asked at every stage of his career what he knew when he had to take critical actions, how he evaluated the evidence before him, and why he reached his decisions." His ac-



Lincoln as a young lawyer

count is based largely on the President's own words, whether in letters and messages or in conversations recorded by reliable witnesses. Donald's encyclopaedic

knowledge of the vast secondary literature is deployed only when letters or documents cannot be found elsewhere. The result is a biography written essentially from Lincoln's point of view, using only the information and ideas that were available to him.

Although this is an austere approach, it is a rewarding one, made possible by the availability of the Lincoln Papers in the Library of Congress. After the ten-volume authorised life by Nicolay and Hay appeared in 1890 these papers were sealed until 1947, and were therefore not available to such major biographers as Albert J. Beveridge, William E. Barton or Carl Sandburg.

Donald devotes refreshingly little space to correcting the errors of previous biographers. Equally commendably, he sets his face against historiographical discussion: "This is a book about Lincoln — not a book about the literature about Lincoln."

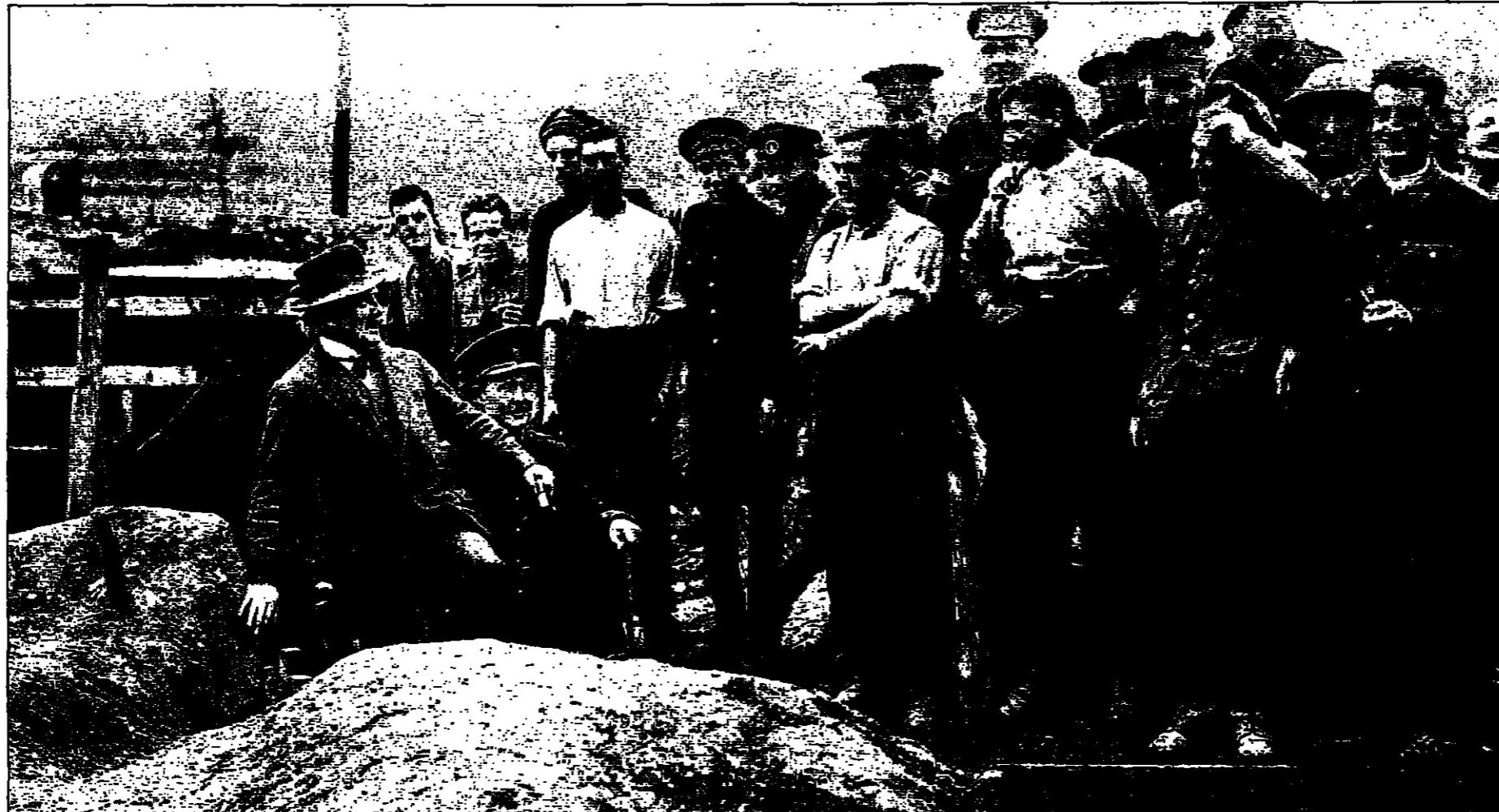
Of the many which did, Donald gives a masterly description. Lincoln's relations with McClellan and later with Grant; the development of his thinking on the Emancipation Proclamation and the ideas and rhetoric of the Gettysburg Address; his campaign for re-election in 1864 and Radical plans to unshackle him — all are passed in orderly and judicious review.

Donald believes that in focusing closely on Lincoln himself — "on what he knew, when he knew it, and why he made his decisions" — he has been led to paint him in different colours from earlier biographers. A less modest man might have said that the colours were not just different, but truer.

He is struck by how often chance played a determining role and emphasises Lincoln's enormous capacity for growth. Most importantly he insists on the essential passivity of Lincoln's nature. Indeed he chooses as an epigraph a sentence from a letter which convinces him that this was a trait which Lincoln recognised in himself: "I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me."

After half a century of Lincoln studies, Donald does not believe in doing his readers' work for them. Like all the best biographies, this finely written book seeks to explain rather than to judge. What it explains is how one of the least experienced and most poorly prepared men ever elected to high office became the greatest American President.

He mounted the warrior's steed



Lloyd George knew that military strategy was intimately connected with the morale of the troops on the front lines with British soldiers in a trench near Fricourt, France, 1916

At the time Lloyd George formed his coalition Government at the end of 1916, Britain was in far greater peril than most people realised. Still facing the combined German, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires with their interior lines, Britain was running out of manpower, shipping, food and cash. Its principal allies, France and Russia, were even more gravely weakened.

Soon matters became much worse, as Germany declared unrestricted U-boat warfare, Russia's effective participation in the war was brought to an end by revolution, and the French Army, after another failed offensive, was struck by mutinies. On the credit side America entered the war, but in such a state of military unpreparedness that it would be a long time before there could be any significant consequences on the Western front, where the war had to be decided. Britain's contribution was, therefore, more essential than ever, but in early 1917 its ability to survive seemed increasingly doubtful. Stocks of wheat, which had been enough to last 14 weeks when Lloyd George took office, had fallen to nine weeks' supply by mid-April.

Yet within two years of the formation of his Government, and before the Americans could achieve a massive presence in Europe, the enemy empires had collapsed and the war was won. How much of this astonishing reversal of fortune was due to Lloyd George himself? In what sense was he, as David French says, "the indispensable man necessary to win the war"?

French is a penetrating ana-

lyst and judicious in his assessments. He is by no means blind to Lloyd George's faults and does not oversimplify the merits of his Government. He doubts, for instance, that the small War Cabinet Lloyd George set up "enhanced the efficiency of central govern-

ment to any great extent". He did, however, make a number of vital appointments, among which that of Sir Joseph Macarthur as Shipping Controller was perhaps the most vital. Macarthur was a strong advocate of the convoy system, as was the Secretary of the War Cabinet, Sir Maurice Hankey. Lloyd George was not immediately converted to the idea, but once he was the results were decisive. Without accepting the too dramatic story that he imposed the system outright when he visited the Admiralty on April 30, 1917, French considers that the Admiralty would have taken even longer to agree to it "without the Prime Minister's overt pressure".

However, he insists that convoys and the Govern-

ment's shipbuilding programme, though important, did less to avert defeat than the policy of reducing imports and concentrating shipping on the shortest routes, particularly the Atlantic. Either way, Lloyd George's measures certainly saved the country and with it the Allied cause.

Above all, French argues that Lloyd George "saw more clearly than any other British

John Grigg
THE STRATEGY OF THE LLOYD GEORGE COALITION 1916-1918
By David French
Clarendon Press, £40

policymaker the intimate connection between strategy and national morale". Hence his desire for relatively cheap success in the Levant (which he achieved), and his reluctance to commit the British Army to any further grandiose offensives in the West. Unfortunately his mistaken support for the French General Nivelle at the beginning of 1917, and his bungled attempt to put Haig under Nivelle, deprived him of moral authority, and to some extent of self-confidence, in dealing with Haig later that year. French takes this and other factors fully into account in seeking to explain Lloyd George's failure to prevent one of the war's most ghastly attritional struggles, the third Battle of Ypres. He is convincing on Lloyd George's reasons

for allowing the battle to be launched, but why he did not at least try to stop it before its terrible last phase, at Passchendaele, is never adequately explained.

It was quite right, in French's view, that British manpower was conserved during the ensuing winter. He supports Lloyd George on that issue, and does not blame him for the initial success of the German offensive in the spring of 1918. When victory for the Allies followed between August and November, it took everybody by surprise, soldiers and civilians alike. Lloyd George's first instinct was to carry the war into Germany and make sure that the victory was unmistakable. "If peace were made now," he said presciently on October 13, "in

20 years' time the Germans would say what Carthage had said about the First Punic War... that by better preparation and organisation they would be able to bring about victory next time." But the supposed cost of prolonging the war, together with other factors, resulted in what French sees as a premature armistice. This, rather than Versailles, may have been what caused all the sacrifice of the Great War to be wasted.

French's valuable work deserves a wider readership than it is likely to have. Produced at a deterrent price, it is also presented in a severely academic mode, with references cluttering almost every page. But no one with a serious interest in the subject can afford to miss it.

These impressions have been revived by the appearance — only four years after the poet's death — of this critical biography. It says much for the author that, if he cannot remove such reservations, he does much to modify

Clive Wilmer

ROY FULLER
Writer and
Society
By Neil Powell
Carcanet, £25

them and much to increase one's sympathy for Fuller. He compels attention to poems that might be overlooked; and his re-evaluation of Fuller's 11 novels persuades me that these have been unjustly neglected. Acute and judicious, he is as unafraid of severity as of enthusiasm and has an unfailing eye for the telling detail.

The book belongs, in short, to a threatened species: intelligent contemporary criticism. As such, it exemplifies the best of the values Fuller himself championed. Though he moved in the course of his life from wild Left to respectable Centre, Fuller was consistent in defending what Powell calls "a culturally enabling socialism": a belief in the democratisation and preservation of high culture. In his last years he accepted the responsibility of making this case in public, first as Oxford Professor of Poetry, and then when his orderly skills were called upon by public bodies such as the Poetry Book Society, the BBC and the Arts Council.

Powell succeeds in making this last phase as absorbing as anything in Fuller's life — as his wartime experience in East Africa or his dotty northern childhood, spent drifting with a widowed mother between seaside hotels. As biography, the book works best when a larger glimpse of society is included. Where more intimate relationships are concerned, there are odd lacunae. One would like to know more about Fuller's family. His wife, in particular, is never described and we are not even told exactly how he met her. But it is a relief to read a new biography that has no need for sensational revelations. Fuller, always a reticent man, would have been pleased.

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Augusta's paradise preserved for all

Patricia Morison
KEW
The History of the Royal Botanic Gardens
By Ray Desmond
Harrill, £25

the known plants on earth". Ah, the confidence of the age! Even now, Kew grows only 10 per cent of the world's known flora. Happily, it still has a ginkgo planted by Princess Augusta, and Chambers's outrageous Pagoda, minus its glittering dragon finials — could this be another use for National Lottery money? In the last war, the RAF cut holes in every floor and dropped bomb bombs through, to get a 100-foot vertical drop.

Kew's toiling gardeners hardly feature in the book, the focus instead being on the great directors, Banks, William and Joseph Hooker and, in the 1890s, the autocratic Thistleton-Dyer who finally drove the gardeners to revolt. These directors needed to be fighters because the Royal Botanic Gardens led such a shaky existence and twice in the last century would have

founded, save for directorial obduracy. Kew's critics were legion and included scientists angered by its dog-in-the-manger attitude to plants, Treasury officials, and the ambitions of the British Museum and Royal Horticultural Society. Journalists sniped that Kew's floral beds were too gaudy, or not gaudy enough. Men of science and morality, Kew's directors generally viewed the public as the enemy. What had the higher realms of botany to do with nurseries pushing param-



ADRIAN BROOKS

bulators? In Kew's woods and ditches, the poor got up to worse things than children's games. Thistleton-Dyer was plagued by a Mrs Wheatstone who ran a brothel beside the herbarium, then a tea-shop at Kew Palace Lodge. Even in Princess Augusta's time, the public were allowed free into the Botanic collection, if respectably dressed (no coloured neckties). But access to the whole gardens, opening hours, and where the gates should be, were all hotly disputed. Residents held In-

scrip

Wind, rain and words

The story is as old as man, and man is old on Orkney. Four thousand years ago the megalith-builders left their mark there, the *Orkneyinga Saga* survives, a vessel for the tales of Norse blood-feuds. All had their storytellers, and now Orkney has George Mackay Brown.

His is a difficult task, one made the harder by what he calls the "basilisk" state of newsprint, radio, television". Yet, for more than 40 years he has persevered, writing still by hand, publishing steadily if sometimes unevenly plays and novels, stories, poems. Epitomising Kant's dictum that the greatest journey a man can make is the journey inside his own head, Mackay Brown has left Orkney only since the 1950s, when he studied under Edwin Muir in Edinburgh. This collection of 18

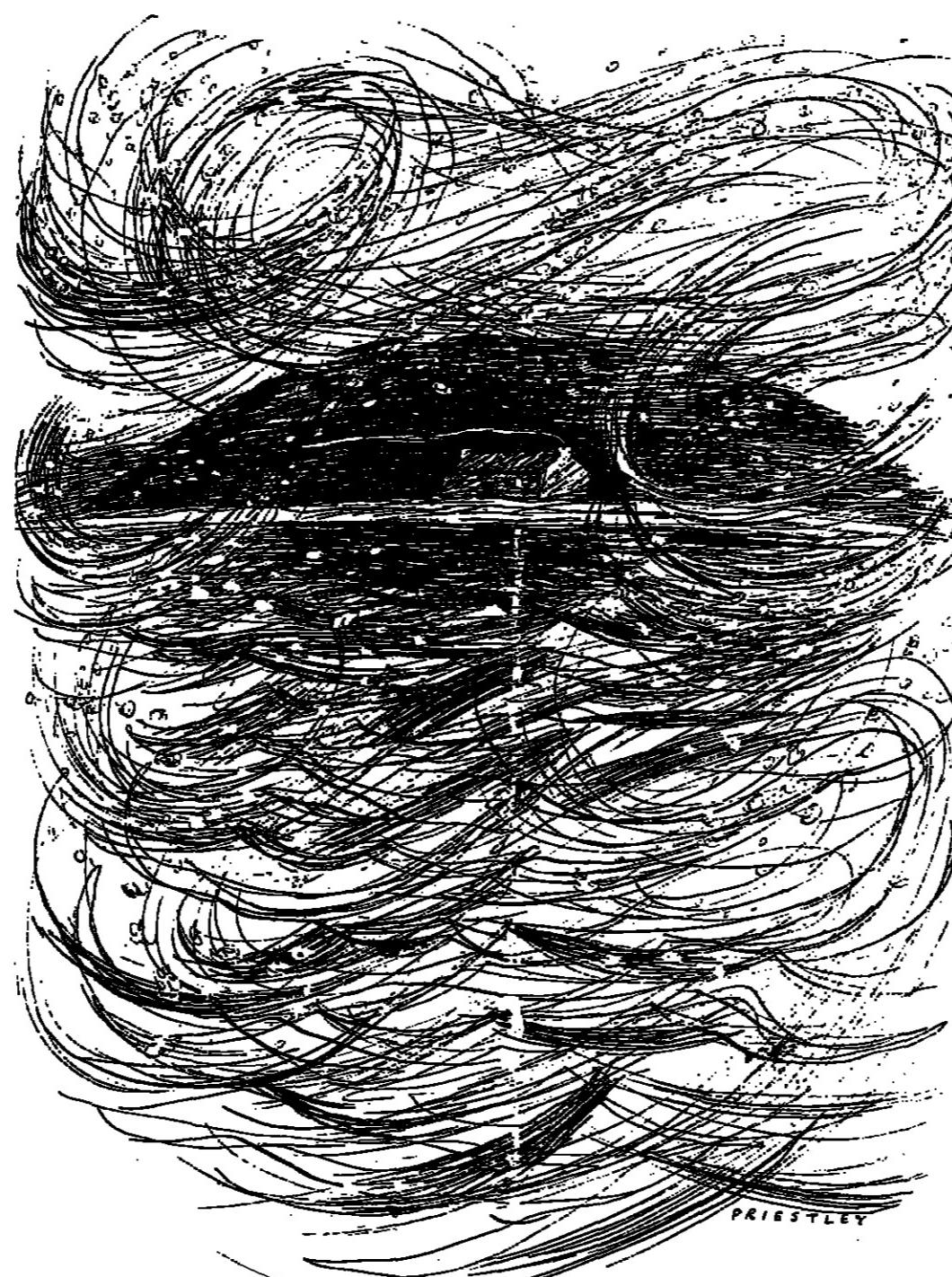
Ross Leckie

WINTER TALES
By George Mackay Brown
John Murray, £15.99

short stories written over the last 20 years shows that it is not dull to have Orkney in the blood; it is to have the elemental.

Just as the islands of which he sometimes seems a rocky outcrop have no trees, Mackay Brown's stories lack as much as they contain. There is almost no emotion before Mackay Brown's chthonian deities. There is only sea and wind and life and death and earth. These stories are threnodies and elegies — for many things that were, and might have been, and some that might yet be.

The prose reflects these themes. Though finely wrought, there is about it a deliberate and beguiling unease. It is clipped and stripped, lapidary, heavily end-stopped. But then it is suddenly epic, resonating the oral tradition that these stories manage to make quite their own. We have the "star-thronged wheel of darkness", the "deep-cargoed ship", the Homeric "winged word". Then lavishly Mackay Brown puts his ears back and the dark powers he would master sing: "That year, the elements of sun and rain and wind were so exquisitely measured and scattered upon the furrows that the little black-ploughed fields



PRIESTLEY

sown with barley and oats had shallow pools of green soon, and then the sloping rectangles were all green, all crammed with murmurings and whisperings in the wayward wind..."

But man in these stories is a cipher, and a generation but a "slow ponderous wave of time". A consistent theme is eventual light in the darkness. At its best, as in *Ikey*, this is moving. At its worst, as in *The Architect* or *The Road to Emmaus*, it becomes only a rather laboured manifestation of a convert's own Catholicism. We miss the tragedy of many men's preferences for the dark. Differently and secularly handled, it can be compelling. *The Sons of Upland Farm* is almost unbearably painful before a

revelation, a story stark then startling in its profundity.

Yet ciphers these characters remain. Only in the poetry of R. S. Thomas is such bleakness elsewhere to be found. People are vanity. When they are not indigenous islanders, they are puppets before Mackay Brown's inefutable and atavistic gods.

So, in *The Woodcarver*, is the laird of the island no more than a symbol for "a progressive young man newly out of Cambridge"; in *Ikey* you think that Dr. Aeneas Giles Logan has escaped stereotype — until, inevitably, he too contributes to Mackay Brown's transmuted Orkney, and placed a boulder on that larger, awesome cairn.

fire," he says. "We get shaken back into them in the end."

This is dangerous ground. If these stories are to succeed, they must rise from the parochial and touch the universal. Nova Scotia, not Orkney, is Alasdair MacLeod's point of departure in his collection of stories, *The Lost Salt Gift of Blood*, that now defines this genre. Mackay Brown may fall short of that mark, but he brings us very close. In Sophocles' *Ajax*, a play of which Mackay Brown's Dr Logan would approve, Ajax says: "I see that we are, all of us, mere shadows, phantoms of nothing." With *Winter Tales*, Mackay Brown has transcended Orkney, and placed a boulder on that larger, awesome cairn.

Derwent May on the witty stories of Julian Barnes

More than just Sleeve notes

There is a great deal of pleasure to be had from this first collection of short stories by Julian Barnes. But the blurb is slightly misleading. "No one has a better perspective to see things from both sides of the Channel than Barnes," it says.

But I remember the opening paragraph of Barnes's article on the Channel Tunnel, in his volume of *Letters from London* written for *The New Yorker*. There he describes how Flaubert's character Bouvard, on learning that an earthquake might cause Britain and France to tumble into each other, runs away in terror — not of the cataclysm, but of the idea of the British coming nearer. These ten stories are about the British in France — a view from one side. The French, like Bouvard, seem mostly to have fled from them.

They are also stories of a very distinct character. They range from the 17th to the 21st century, defining moments when typical British folk had (or may be expected to have) a presence in France. There is very little individual emotion or drama in them. They delicately, and often wittily, re-create with all its flavour a passage of social history.

The first story, *Interference*, is about a vain, bad-tempered English composer who has isolated himself in a French village in the early 1930s. Art, he believes, justifies him in total egotism. He has alienated all the villagers, yet has to persuade them to turn off their various electrical machines to prevent interference when he wants to hear his works being broadcast on the BBC from London. There are numerous perfect period touches, such as his description of the conductor Adrian Boult as his "young champion". He dies one afternoon when his last work is being performed, and his wife has failed to alert the baker and butcher and farmers in time for them to switch off.

The whole story turns deftly and elegantly on this witty idea, yet the composer hardly seems an individual. He is like an intricate shell, perfectly reflecting a stage in its inhabitant's evolution, but without the inhabitant inside.

CROSS CHANNEL
By Julian Barnes
Jonathan Cape, £13.99

Other stories have similar strengths and weaknesses. *Experiment* is about the narrator's Uncle Freddy, a traveller for genuine wax polish who went to France for a motor rally in 1928 and got caught up with the Surrealists. This was because he said in a bar that he travelled in "Cire réaliste" — or, perhaps, when asked why he was there, said "Je suis, sire, rallyste". Or maybe he even said, talking of the white wine he was drinking, "Je

particular good in this story — the vineyards running across the land "like green corduroy", a blister "like a broad bean" — but I could not help wondering if it was not my own visits to the Médoc that made the story especially enjoyable for me, just as *Brambilla*, about the Tour de France, might especially please cyclists with its anecdotes.

There is only one story here that really grips by its tension and anguish — *Dragons*, which is about the persecution of the Protestants in the south of France 350 years ago, with an exiled Irish soldier among the savage persecutors.

In the last story, an ageing author is travelling to France by Eurostar early in the next century. This — we are led to suppose — is an oblique self-portrait by Barnes. He is a rather Kingsley Amis-like character here (though *Amba* would never have gone to France), testily but self-mockingly fussing about the correct use of language. He hints at the way in which characters he meets on the train turn into characters in his stories, and offers a profession of faith: he is obsessed, he says, with the recalling of "distant truths", and his art is dedicated to that recall by means of the "resonant fragment".

The best of all the stories here, *Evermore*, shares that preoccupation with remembering. A woman has spent her life going to France again and again, visiting the sites of First World War battles, after her brother was killed between an Englishwoman and a Frenchwoman is just an ingenious piece of reconstruction of that milieu.

One of the very best stories is *Hermitage*, about two English women friends in the 1890s who buy a run-down château and vineyard in the Médoc. The lengthy accounts of the battlefields and graveyards could practically serve as a guide-book for visitors (and would give the famous *New Yorker* fact-checkers a terrible time). If his old friend Martin Amis had not already used the title *The Information* for his latest novel, it would have been a perfectly appropriate one for Julian Barnes's new book.



Barnes: resonant fragments

suis sur Reuillys". A brilliant trio of puns — quite surrealists themselves — but the subsequent story of how his new friends tested out whether he could distinguish blindfold between an Englishwoman and a Frenchwoman is just an ingenious piece of reconstruction of that milieu.

One of the very best stories is *Hermitage*, about two English women friends in the 1890s who buy a run-down château and vineyard in the Médoc. Their relationship, with its Victorian mixture of frankness and primness, is touchingly sketched, but once again the real interest lies in the account of the place and the time — the grape varieties being used, the varied reactions to the phylloxera menace, the other grape diseases (on which we get an entertaining but encyclopaedic paragraph). The descriptions are

The bitter sound of truth

THOMAS BERNHARD loathed Austria. Contempt for his compatriots and disgust at the State they inhabited were passions that sustained him throughout his life, and seemingly beyond. When he died in 1989, he left a will forbidding publication of his performance of his works in his native land, and rejecting in advance any efforts the Austrian republic might make at posthumous rapprochement with one of its most eminent opponents.

There was more to this, of course, than simple loathing. There may once have been an Austria Bernhard loved, but the Austria he lived in had destroyed it. From the mid-1950s he laid bare that destruction in novels, short stories, poems, polemics and plays. In the bleak comedy of *Extinction* — his last novel, published in German in 1986 and now deftly rendered into English by David McLintock — Bernhard's reckoning with Austria finds one of its most compelling forms.

There is autobiography in all of Bernhard's fiction, just

as there is fiction in his autobiographical works. Real names are put to creative use. Living people are thinly disguised (too thinly, Bernhard's publishers and their lawyers discovered more than once). Identifiable places and buildings become symbols, the monumental repositories where history takes shape.

And above all, there is in Bernhard's protagonists something of Bernhard himself: sickly, obsessive, detached; wordily introspective to the point almost of madness; consumed by violent hatreds.

Franz-Josef Murau, narrator of *Extinction*, is typical. Superfluous younger son of wealthy parents, he resides in Rome, an unorthodox teacher of German literature. The whole of his existence, he tells his sole pupil, Gambetti, has been nothing more than "a struggle to throw off the disease of Austrian mindlessness".

For Murau, as for Bernhard, Austria is and always will be an "essentially National Socialist and Catholic nation" — the terms are inseparable and almost interchangeable. The country's tainted past and corrupt present are concentrated in the buildings and occupants of the where history takes shape.

Ian Brunskill
EXTINCTION
By Thomas Bernhard
Quartet, £16

Murau's family estate at Wolfegg, (Schloss Wolfegg — though not this Schloss Wolfegg — exists near Bernhard's several homes in Upper Austria, it recurs in his work from the early 1960s.)

Murau wants nothing of Wolfegg and what it represents, but he gets it all regardless. A car crash kills his father, mother and elder brother, forcing him to confront his poisoned inheritance. He does so in a moving, maddening, unparagraphed monologue that interweaves the threads of his troubled life: Wolfegg and Rome, architecture and history, politics and poetry, philosophy and art.

Almost inadvertently, from the depths of his self-absorption, Murau conjures a detailed world and a vivid supporting cast — a weak father and monstrous mother; two unloved, unloved sisters; cosmopolitan Uncle Georg; huntsmen and gardeners; the sinister archbishop Spadolini; the poet Maria (who owes something to Ingeborg Bachmann); a portly, vulgar maker of wine-corks from Freiburg. All, like Murau himself, are viewed with cruel detachment — and who knows how much cruel distortion?

MURAUS aim, and Bernhard's, is to come to terms with what has made him what he is, and to destroy it. Murau, like Bernhard, will call his defining, definitive written account *Extinction*, "because in it I intend to extinguish everything: everything I record will be extinguished". It is a grim and grotesque endeavour, accomplished with savage panache.

Working the graveyard shift

Lois Rathbone

JUST LIKE THAT
By Lily Brett
Andre Deutsch, £15.99

crash: "It was a pretty dramatic way to go."

The tone, though, is one of relentless comedy and the story rattles along, with good doses of humour of the Woody Allen variety. Food and formality are the two things which take Esther's mind off work, and there are some graphic descriptions of both. A green salad in a hip, downtown restaurant is likely to be composed of oak leaves, dandelions and nasturtiums. "Melbourne was overrun with nasturtiums and dandelion leaves, and we're paying ten bucks a plate for them in Manhattan."

Brett invents a fine supporting cast of family and friends.



Brett: death and survival

powered lawyer, pregnant with fraternal twins, of which one, both or neither may conceivably be the offspring of her lover not her husband. She is a woman of terrifying verbal indiscretion, given to discussing vaginas and haemorrhoids in the middle of crowded restaurants. And there is Sean, Esther's husband. Considering the parallels between the author's life and that of her heroine, it comes as no surprise that Sean follows the same profession as Brett's own husband, David Rankin, an Australian painter. Sean is portrayed with such affection that the whole novel seems to have been intended as a love letter to the ideal husband.

Lois Rathbone is on the obituaries staff of The Times.



CHANGING TIMES

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EC plans cheap trips for oldies

THE TIMES THURSDAY JANUARY 11 1996

TRAVEL NEWS

Eurostar cuts Paris fare to £69

BY JONATHAN PRYNN

THE price of a return Eurostar rail ticket to Paris tumbled to £69 this week to mark the start of high-speed train services from Ashford International station in Kent.

The new fare, which is available to passengers on the day of travel, brings the cost of journeys to Paris in line with tickets on the less popular Brussels route. Paris had previously been £7 more expensive than the Belgian capital at £76. The only requirement is that passengers stay at least one Saturday night or three other nights in Paris. The day return price remains at £95.

The new fare, which is almost certain to be followed by further reductions this year as competition with the airlines intensifies, came the day after the start of Eurostar services from Ashford. The new 1996 timetable shows nine departures a day from the Kent terminal, five to Paris and four to Brussels, with seven inbound services from the Continent.

The new timetable brings the centre of the French capital within a two-hour train ride for passengers starting their journeys in Ashford with trips to Brussels taking two and a quarter hours. Prices are the same as for departures from London.

The timetable also features a new early morning departure for Paris aimed at the business market. It leaves Waterloo International at 6.19am, calls at Ashford an hour later and arrives in Paris

Gard du Nord at 10.24am. It is aimed at countering criticism from British business executives that Eurostar could not deliver them in Paris in time for morning meetings.

European Passenger Services (EPS), the operator of Eurostar, is in the vanguard of the movement to bring British clocks in line with the Continent, partly because its early morning services would become far more competitive with the airlines (see below).

The opening of Ashford marks the start of a crucial year for Eurostar. The next 12 months will see the future ownership of EPS decided by the Government and the start of through trains to the provinces of Britain.

Direct services from Paris and Brussels to Birmingham and Manchester and Glasgow on the West Coast main line and to Edinburgh on the East Coast main line are expected to commence this summer.

Testing of the Eurostar trains that will be used for these services has already started, although the timetable has been set back by the recent strikes in France.

However, the schedule for the introduction of overnight services from London and the regions to France, Belgium, Germany and Holland, has been more seriously delayed because the sleeper trains are now not expected to be delivered by Metro Cammell, their manufacturer, in time for the original planned starting date later this year.

Ferries declare war

BY STEVE KEENAN

CUSTOMERS are the biggest winners as rail and ferry operators slash prices in the battle for business on routes across the English Channel, the Irish Sea and the North Sea.

Ferry companies' profits slumped in 1995 after the opening of the Channel Tunnel despite an increase of 7 per cent in passenger traffic — 13.5 million return journeys were made on 58,000 Channel crossings.

Eurostar applied more pressure this week by cutting its cheapest fare. (The cheapest British Airways World Offer fare is £66.60.) And Le Shuttle has extended a 20 per cent discount offer for travel up to 60 days in advance until March 31.

There is also competition from a new ferry operator, Sea France, on the Dover-Calais route. Brittany Ferries is offering 25 per cent

off bookings made before January 31 for any journey this year. This reduces the price of the Portsmouth-Caen crossing in August for a car and up to eight passengers from £273 to £204.75.

Stena Line is offering a 20 per cent discount to Calais, Dieppe, Cherbourg and Hook of Holland for bookings made by January 31. HoverSpeed is cutting 60 per cent off its price for Dover-Calais for bookings made by February 28.

Stena is also offering a 20 per cent discount on the Fishguard-Rosslare route across the Irish Sea, forcing Irish Ferries to cut its return fare on the same run from £328 to £258 for bookings made by January 31.

North Sea Ferries has cut the cost of a cabin and car for four from £506 to £385 in peak season.

Two famous leisure attractions get a change of style

Activity drive by Butlin's

BY HELEN CONWAY

SIXTY years after opening its first holiday camp at Skegness, Butlin's is setting its sights on attracting a more up-market clientele to its centres.

For this summer, the company has launched a new multiactivity programme called Leisure Pursuits, which plays down the Butlin's connection for fear it may prove a turn-off for some people.

A brochure has been produced featuring 12 different activities including abseiling, canoeing, orienteering and windsurfing, as well as more unusual activities like dragon boating and hovercrafting.

Accommodation for the whole programme is based at the five Butlin's holiday worlds in the UK: Somerset World in Minehead, Southcoast World in Bognor Regis, Starcoast World in Pwllheli, Funcoast World in Skegness and Wonderwest World on the Scottish coast at Ayr.

However, while the traditional Butlin's holiday programme encourages holidaymakers to stay on-site and make full use of the subtropical water worlds, funfairs and other leisure facilities, all the activities in Leisure Pursuits take place outside.

Holidaymakers can choose just to use the centre for sleeping and book the activities package with self-catering arrangements. Prices start at £74 per person for a three-night break with self-catering accommodation and £200 per person for a week's holiday, including all activities.



Sweet-dreams hotel

A NEW hotel at Alton Towers will have rooms sponsored by chocolate and soft-drink manufacturers, offering unlimited supplies of their products. Steve Keenan writes.

Cadbury's is sponsoring a room with a chocolate dispenser and doors, a TV set like a box of roses and chairs replicating melted chocolate.

Another room is to be sponsored by Coca Cola, who will also supervise the decor. It is the first time private firms have sponsored rooms in a UK hotel, and follows the success of the Walt Disney Company in separately themed its six hotels at Disneyland Paris.

The rooms will cost around

£200 for a family of six per night. The other 171 rooms in the themed hotel, to open on March 16, will cost families of four £100 a night. Each has a "secret" drawer for children to discover.

The £20 million hotel will also have a reception desk created from lost luggage and an old-fashioned gift shop. A plan to include a resident teddy bear in each room was shelved because the company feared huge losses.

Around 17 per cent of visitors to Alton Towers stay overnight. It is also hoping to attract themed business conferences. The park had 180,000 corporate visitors last year and will be able to host conferences for 180.

Airlines fight daylight Bill

BY HARVEY ELLIOTT

HOLIDAY flight schedules could be thrown into chaos if Britain adopts "daylight extra" and moves to a common central European time, according to charter airlines.

Despite strong backing from most of the British tourist industry for a Private Member's Bill proposing the switch, charter airlines fear that it would lead either to a sharp increase in night flights or to British flights being crowded out of holiday airports at peak times.

Supporters of John Butterill's British Time (Extra Daylight) Bill, which is scheduled for a second reading on January 19, last night briefed MPs on potential benefits of an additional hour of daylight.

But airlines fear that not enough attention has been paid to resolving initial problems involved in the switch. Holidaymakers could face higher prices, confusion and even wholesale cancellations if it goes ahead, they say.

The problem revolves around take-off and landing slot times, which are negotiated internationally in Greenwich Mean Time. This means that a summer charter flight which leaves Gatwick, for example, at 0700 local time is using a slot negotiated for 0600 GMT. When the extra daylight hour is introduced, 0700 would become 0800 local. But the slot time would remain at 0600 GMT.

The airline would, therefore, have the option of either staying with the existing GMT slot and making the take-off time 0800 local or keeping the 0700 local take-off schedule and renegotiating the GMT

slot to 0500. But this would bring forward the landing time at the destination airport by an hour and would create problems because many airports in the Mediterranean are already heavily congested.

If the airline kept the same GMT slot but left an hour later in local time, evening flights would also be an hour later and therefore impinge on the night flying curfew times.

"We would have no option but to have more quotas for night flights," says Bob Parker-Eaton, deputy managing director of Britain's biggest charter carrier, Britannia. That would either upset the noise protesters or mean our cancelling our third rotation of the day. That would create problems which, we calculate, would cost Britannia alone £20 million a year through loss of aircraft utilisation.

The charter airlines are pressing for the date of the proposed extra hour — planned for October 1997 — to be delayed until airlines have been able to renegotiate slot times.

Meanwhile the rest of the tourism industry remains in favour of the changes.

"Although there might be some confusion at first the long-term advantages outweigh the short-term problems" says Richard Tobias of the British Incoming Tour Operators Association. He claims an extra hour of daylight would produce up to a billion pounds worth of additional revenue by allowing tourists more time to visit attractions, and that travel and communication with the rest of Europe would be easier.

BARGAINS OF THE WEEK

HOLIDAYS

SKI holiday bargains and information on late bookings available from more than 20 tour operators are being collated by Connect France, which promises discounts of up to 40 per cent and £200 this month. Details: 0500 456645.

■ A WEEK in Majorca for £99, leaving Cardiff Airport on Monday is available from Cosmos. A fortnight costs £40 more. Details: 0161-484944.

■ FLORIDA Magic is offering free child places on some holidays until February 4, providing each child is accompanied by two adults. They will pay from £385 per person for return flights, three nights at a Best Western

hotel and four days hire. Details: 0645 747757.

■ SAVINGS of £40 to £100 per person are being offered.

The Imaginative Travel for its 19-day fully-escorted China tour leaving Peking March 10. The all-inclusive price will still be close to £2,000 per person. Details: 0181-742 8612.

■ LAS Vegas can be reached non-stop from Gatwick from Monday when Unjet launches its inaugural service. Combined with new flights are week-long hotel holidays starting from £299 per person. Details: 01444 459191.

■ HOTELS

featuring favourite love songs. Details: 0345 581595.

■ TRAVEL INN, the budget hotel chain owned by Whitbread, yesterday opened its 100th UK hotel on the waterfront at Salford Quays, Manchester. The 52-room hotel has a fixed rate of £35.50 a room a night. Next door is the Beefeater restaurant and pub. Details: 0162 414341.

■ EVEN though St Valentine's Day is midweek this year, Hilton National is offering "treat the one you love" weekend breaks immediately before and after February 14 at 25 of its UK hotels. Rates start at £59.00 a person a night and include champagne and a rose on arrival, dinner and a CD

\$7 (about £50) a night until April 15, then drop to \$50 (about £35) night until December. Details: 0800 614 790.

■ CHILDREN under 13 can now stay and eat free at 165-strong First Posthouse chain when accompanying their parents on Leisure Breaks packages. Children can either eat from a special menu or have half portions from the main menu. Details: 0345 404040.

■ ONLY one in every three hotels now offers guests "turn-down" service (turning back the bed covers), according to a survey Horwath UK, a hotel consultancy. But more than half of hotels surveyed provide non-smoking rooms. Horwath: 0171-353 5380.

FLIGHTS

Air from next Thursday until the end of February will be upgraded at no extra cost. Details: 0171-734 7755.

■ TRAVEL Warehouse is offering a return to Tokyo for £388 until the end of February. Flights are with Air France with connections to Heathrow, Birmingham, Edinburgh and Manchester. Details: 0171-414 8908.

■ UNITED's "Fare of the Year" promotion provides a return business class flight from London to New York or Washington for £1,996, a saving of £350. Details: 0181-990 9900.

■ AIR UK has extended the validity of its £299 three-day and £249 day return economy and business-class tickets with Gulf

hagen, Florence, Madrid, Munich and Zurich. Details: 0345 666777.

■ CLUB members flying British Airways from Milan from London, Birmingham, Glasgow, Manchester earn double Miles on business class flights taken before the end of February. Details: 0990 323222.

■ MANX Airlines has launched a Club Sovereign frequent flyer scheme. Benefits include free flights and airport lounge access. Details: 0345 256256.

gate routes at £10 per car plus five people, £39 for five days. Hoverspeed five-day return at £59 for a car plus two passengers (£85 standard return). Both sets of fares valid until March 31. Stena Line routes to Calais, Dieppe and Cherbourg for £39 (three day return), £49 (five day return) and £69 standard, all for car plus five. Bookings by February 15 for travel by April. Details: 0181 342 8979.

■ SCANDINAVIAN Seaways is offering 50 per cent off fares from Harwich to either Hamburg, Esbjerg or Gothenburg on selected dates until March 15. Details: 0990 333000.

■ HOVERSPEED has a standby fare, until January 31, on its Dover-Calais SeaCat service of £10 a car and £1 each passenger. For passengers £2 daytrippers. Details: 01304 204241.

■ SALLY Ferries is quoting a Winter Saver fare of £50, until March 31, for a five-day return for a car and up to five passengers (£99 standard return) on its Ramsgate routes to Dunkirk and Ostend. Details: 01843 595566.

■ EURODRIVE quotes daytrips on Sally Ferries' Ramsgate routes at £10 per car plus five people, £39 for five days. Hoverspeed five-day return at £59 for a car plus two passengers (£85 standard return). Both sets of fares valid until March 31. Stena Line routes to Calais, Dieppe and Cherbourg for £39 (three day return), £49 (five day return) and £69 standard, all for car plus five. Bookings by February 15 for travel by April. Details: 0181 342 8979.

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TIME

Smith may be promoted to opener

Stewart threatened by England's search for order

FROM SIMON WILDE IN BLOEMFONTEIN

ENGLAND'S cricketers arrived here yesterday with their morale as low as it has been since they began their tour of South Africa 12 weeks ago after their capitulation in the first one-day international on Tuesday night.

The only relief for the tour management is that the team has bidden farewell to Cape Town, where it lost three matches that appeared to be in the bag and, in the frank assessment of Raymond Illingworth, the manager, yesterday, the players lost focus and commitment because of the presence of their families.

England postponed until this morning announcing their team for the second in the series of seven one-day internationals here this afternoon, but changes are almost certain, possibly radical ones. Fielding a team packed with limited-overs factotums, as England did on Tuesday, is sound enough in theory, but if, in practice, they fall under pressure, it is dangerously flawed.

After just one match, England are seriously considering abandoning this strategy and again altering the balance of their side. There appear to be two alternatives open to them. One is to bring in a sixth batsman, perhaps Rampakash, at the expense of an all-rounder, possibly White rather than Reeve, whose lack of match practice is likely to act in his defence. The other is more dramatic: to bring in Robin Smith as an opener, play Russell as wicketkeeper and to drop Stewart.

Stewart has been an integral member of England's one-day side for several years, but, recently, his technique has looked increasingly unconvincing in all international matches. Smith, though not the best of fielders, has an

outstanding one-day record, with as many hundreds for England to his credit as the rest of the party combined. The manager's assessment of the defeat on Tuesday was damning. "We made mistakes that you do not expect professionals to make," he said. "We've got to get back our discipline. There have been a lot of distractions. A lot of people have been around and it's been very busy."

"I would agree that the players have not been as

Hansie Cronje, the South Africa captain, confirmed that his side had been in an almost hopeless position. "It was a case of they lost it rather than we won it," he said. "At the second drinks break [taken shortly before England's collapse], we had a very slim chance to win and thought we would just wait, be calm and see what happened. Shaun Pollock and Allan Donald came back and were very positive."

In the closing stages, the contrast could not have been more stark. South Africa bowled and fielded tirelessly and held on to every chance; the England lower order froze from the moment Fairbrother drove loosely into the hands of mid-on. "There are a lot of areas to tighten up," Atherton said. "We need to find our best combination. We need some cool heads under pressure."

Although Richard Illingworth, their first-choice slow bowler, is not quite recovered from his strained side, England remain keen to field one specialist spinner in each match, even though Atherton gave Neil Smith only two overs in Cape Town.

One thing, at least, about the match on Tuesday cheered Atherton — the profligacy of the early South Africa batsmen, who threw away wickets like confetti. "If South Africa continue to play like that, I will be surprised if we do not beat them," he said. Unfortunately for the England captain, rarely have the past few weeks been surprise-free.

□ The stadium in the Indian city of Nagpur, near Bombay, where a wall collapsed killing ten spectators during an international match in November, was yesterday confirmed as the venue for the Australia-Zimbabwe match in the World Cup on March 1.

Reeve: lack of practice focused in the last week or so as in the first part of the tour. It is difficult when families and friends are here. It is a contentious issue and I do not know what the answer is. Perhaps they should come out earlier, at a quieter period of the tour." The mood of Michael Atherton, the captain, was no less sombre. "We did pretty well to lose," he said.

"I thought it was a game we should have won, but we gave away 17 extras and dropped Pollock with a fairly easy chance. We would have settled for chasing 212, but it should have been 180." From 155 for three, England collapsed to 203 all out to lose by six runs.

Stewart has been an integral member of England's one-day side for several years, but, recently, his technique has looked increasingly unconvincing in all international matches. Smith, though not the best of fielders, has an

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The Metropolitan Club, Ocean Way, 01222 456000

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Minton's acumen endears him to Millions

TONY EDEN

They may not know him by name, but regular racegoers will recognise the man orchestrating joyous scenes in the winner's enclosure. David Minton cuts quite a figure as he handshakes the owner, embraces the trainer and dishes out several thumping slaps to the neck of the winning horse. You can see him radiating pride from a hundreded places.

Indeed, you can recognise Minton's frame from even further afield. He makes a rare exception among a fraternity that habitually walks at breakneck pace. If most trainers carry a little spare flesh as their charges, Minton resembles the horse returning from a prolonged period at grass.

But that, in essence, is the man himself. In every way he is larger than life, a fact to which the many contented shareholders in his Million In Mind syndicates will testify.

Those shareholders have been infected by their leader's unbridled passion for National Hunt racing. It greatly helps if a horse like Myself races in the syndicate's colours, but in the sometimes murky world of multiple ownership, many of Minton's accolades have become annual investors on the pleasure principle alone.

The Million partnerships have grown in numbers every year since their inception five years ago. A syndicate initially

Julian Muscat on a larger than life character with the knack of finding winners for syndicates



ly geared for Flat racing quickly orientated towards jumpers — and a flurry of notable achievements.

That was to be expected given Minton's prowess at plucking Triumph Hurdle winners largely from the Flat racing's wastelands. Connaught Ranger, Saxon Farm, First Bout, Alone Success, Kribensis, and Myself were all his purchases and hopes are high that Our Kris, a 20,000 guineas recruit, can hoist the Million pennant come Cheltenham in March.

Although the horse recently lost his unbeaten record in Sandown's gluepot conditions, bookmakers still rate him Britain's best prospect against the inevitable onslaught from Ireland.

I am greatly helped in buying horses off the Flat by my assistant, Anthony Bromiley. Minton said of his penchant for the Triumph Hurdle: "He follows the form very closely while I will look at the horse's pedigree, which is important, and then assess it as an individual. Very rarely buy American-breds; they can't adapt to hurdles at all. And we always try to buy privately rather than at the sales, where horses can get

very expensive." Minton added.

A prerequisite in any Minton purchase is that it must extend itself at the walk. "Remittance Man, Travado and Barton Bank are three of my best store purchases," he said. "If you want to be critical you could say they were a bit narrow and light in their frames. They never were the most prepossessing individuals but one thing they could do is walk. They were all tremendous athletes."

Minton's eye for a prospective jumper was among the assets inherited by the British Bloodstock Agency (BBA) when he merged his business with the larger firm nine months ago. With Minton now on the board of directors, the BBA, a publicly-quoted company, has far greater ambitions in the National Hunt arena.

He will consequently be filling larger orders at sales of young jumpers. Then there's the Fortune In Mind syndicate, a BBA-inspired, Minton-driven venture aimed at duplicating Million's jumping successes on the Flat. This premium on Minton's time

will do nothing for what he describes as "my dream life of training a handful of young jumpers somewhere out in the country."

Given his National Hunt bias, Minton soon converts to the sport might find it hard to believe Minton was among the Flat's big-spending bloodstock agents as recently as five years ago. He was up there trading seven-figure bids with the sheikhs over the choicer yearlings in his capacity as manager for the Thompsons's Cheveley Park Stud.

Occasionally he would even act for Sheikh Mohammed through his friendship with Anthony Stroud, the sheikh's racing manager and former colleague at the Curragh Bloodstock Agency. Yet he maintains he is now happier than ever, buying regularly for Nicky Henderson, David Nicholson, Henrietta Knight and Micky Hammond in the less rarified atmosphere of stock auctions.

In that sense Minton is only playing true to type. The first deal he ever struck, some 25 years ago, was over Comedy Of Errors, a jumping stalwart who was deprived of a Champion Hurdle treble by Lanzarote. As a grandson of Bob Webb, the Shropshire farmer who bred Pendil, it would have amounted to a betrayal of catastrophic proportions had Minton deserted his roots by concentrating his energies on the Flat.



Minton, a National Hunt stalwart, has purchased six subsequent Triumph Hurdle winners

ROA takes dim view of spoiling tactics

THE conflict of interest between race sponsors and owners displaying commercial sponsorship on their silks escalated yesterday when the Racehorse Owners' Association (ROA) said it would be advising its members not to tolerate the spoiling tactics adopted by George Ward, the chairman of Tripleprint, in the wake of One Man's King George VI Chase victory at Sandown on Saturday (Julian Muscat writes).

John Paxman, director-general of the ROA, said yesterday: "Owners employ jockeys to wear their silks and we maintain it is wrong for those silks to be interfered with." Paxman will also be raising the matter with the British Horseracing Board and racecourse officials next week.

Ward arranged for a sash to be worn by the winning jockey, Richard Dunwoody, which obscured the logo on his silks, giving Tripleprint exclusive television exposure.

Owners and breeders were granted VAT concessions amounting to £20 million in exchange for their commitment to attracting sponsorship. Some £2.7 million has been generated since the scheme was launched 17 months ago, but the concession is up for review by Customs & Excise any time from March.

WINCANTON

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1.10 Wild West Wind 2.40 Highest Roots 3.10 Rectory Garden 3.40 Hale Derring 3.40 Denevare 3.40 Denevare

The Times Private Handicapper's top rating: 3.40 HAILE DERRING.

GOING: GOOD TO SOFT (SOFT IN PLACES) SIS

12.40 SPETSBURY NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (Div 1 £2,758, 2m) (18 runners)

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102 BURLINGTON SAM 29 (0.5) (H) (S) (T) (W) (7) 11-11 P Hinde 83
125 CHARMING GIRL 30 (0.5) (H) (S) (T) (W) (7) 11-11 P Hinde 83
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al blues

Selectors leave out Logan but ignore calls for return of Chalmers

Scotland stand by Townsend against Ireland

BY MARK SOUSTER

THE Scotland rugby union selectors have stayed loyal to the bulk of the team that lost to Italy last weekend for the first match in the five nations' championship, against Ireland in Dublin on Saturday week. Kenny Logan, who is dropped after winning 21 caps, is the main casualty from the defeat in Rome, while the clarion call for the return of Craig Chalmers has been resisted. The selectors can only hope that their loyalty is not misplaced, and that those in the side who have had little competitive rugby recently, mainly because of injury, will be ready.

There is one other enforced change, the recall of Ian Smith, of Gloucester, after the injury to Stuart Reid, and one change that was anticipated, the naming of Doddie Weir at lock in place of Scott Murray. Murray, who, like Weir, can play in the back row, is among the replacements.

After accepting that playing Italy without a recognised goalkicker was a mistake, one that the selectors feel cost them the chance of victory, Scotland have picked Michael Dods, the best person available in the circumstances. However, where to accommodate the Northampton player was the subject of considerable discussion during a lengthy selection meeting on Monday night.

Dods, who, along with Townsend, stood out for Northampton against Bath in the Pilkington Cup match

before Christmas, was almost picked at full back, where Rowan Shepherd has been given another chance. Having performed well on the right wing against Western Samoa in the autumn, he now switches across to displace Logan, who half expected his demise. Logan has lost some of his ebullience and, according to Jim Telfer, the chairman of selectors, needs to regain his appetite for the game.

Telfer hinted that the media

will depend on Townsend as a playmaker. He will have the advantage of a solid, if unspectacular, midfield beside him, and wings and a full back who have ability and pace.

Telfer lauded the defensive qualities of the back division in general, and Scott Hastings in particular. Hastings was described as the best defensive outside centre in Scotland. He is there because, against Ireland at Murrayfield and France in Paris last February, Scotland leaked two tries through the outside centre channel. "He is a good influence in organising defence, and the responsibility of outside centre is far greater than any other position in the back division," Telfer said.

Weir's presence was inevitable to counter the threat of Neil Francis in the lineout.

Weir has been distracted recently by his impending move to Newcastle and all that it implies in terms of contracts for club and country. He went on as a replacement against Italy and should respond to the challenge posed by Ireland. Damian Cronin and Peter Walton were considered, but discounted because of their lack of match fitness after injury.

SCOTLAND 21-10 IRELAND

R Selected (Makau), C. Joiner (Makau), S. Hastings (Wales), J. Townsend (London), R. Shepherd (Northampton), G. Townsend (London), R. Patterson (London), A. Ian Smith (Gloucester), P. Wright (Boroughmuir), I. Smith (Glasgow), S. Campbell (Dundee HFC), D. Weir (Bath), N. Francis (Worcester), E. Peters (Bath), R. McCall (Worcester), K. Logan (Stirling County), C. Chalmers (London), D. Patterson (West Midlands), S. Reid (London), P. Dods (London), P. Burnell (London Scottish), J. Hay (Hawick), R. Campbell (England)

attention enjoyed by the Stirling County player, who, like Chalmers, writes a high-profile newspaper column and is constantly in demand for public appearances, had turned his head; however, he denied that it was a factor in either players' absence from the side.

Chalmers' outspokenness has not gone down well at Murrayfield, where he is regarded as a shop steward of the squad. In retaining, in his place, Gregor Townsend at stand-off half, alongside Bry-



Scotland will be relying on the defensive qualities of Hastings in Dublin

Victorious Exiles have nowhere left to roam

Scottish Exiles 34
South of Scotland 9

BY MARK SOUSTER

IF THIS is the end of the Scottish inter-district rugby union championship, at least in its present form, and thus the final curtain for the Scottish Exiles, then at least they departed with the perfect riposte to those who have engineered their demise. The Exiles duly retained the much-maligned championship by convincingly beating the South of Scotland at Richmond yesterday.

The grand plan for the future of Scottish rugby, both domestically and in Europe, does not include the Exiles, who, since their creation in the early 1980s, have been an invaluable source of talent for Scotland. Jim Telfer, the Scottish Rugby Union's director of rugby, insists that there must be a future for them, but as yet cannot quite see how. Nor can Alastair McHarg, their manager, who is far more pessimistic. With no shop window, the players who qualify for Scotland will be lost.

Telfer, who was at Richmond, said: "I don't know what the answer is, but I would like to think there will still be some contribution they could make. The Exiles are an integral part of the Scottish set-up."

The game, which should have been a showpiece finale, was undermined by withdrawals from both camps, which sums up just how little a priority the championship is for players, despite being the likely route into Europe and the Scotland team. Still, there were two internationals on view, with Hilton, Peters, Walton and Cronin, for the Exiles, opposing the likes of Joiner, Weir and Hay.

Laing and Welsh traded penalty goals in the first quarter before Dixon scored the first of his tries

for the Exiles after a break by Wynn. Laing converted. The South relied heavily on Weir for possession at the front of the lineout and he did not disappoint, but, for the most part, they were fighting a rearguard action.

Leading 10-6 at half-time, the Exiles scored three more tries in the second half, the first by Aaron James, the Wasps centre, who linked well with his forwards. Patterson scampered over for the next and Dixon added his second after Wynn again had made the initial break.

The victory was the Exiles' eighth in a row spanning two seasons.

Telfer presented the cup to Eric Peters, but the celebrations were understandably a little flat.

SCORERS: Scottish Exiles: T. Dixon (2), J. James, P. Patterson; Conversions: Laing (4). Penalty goals: Laing (2). South: Penalties: goals: Welsh (3).

SCOTTISH EXILES: A. Kerr (Monkley), M. Kemp (London), R. Hilton (London), A. James (London), S. North (Ormskirk), S. Peters (London), D. Patterson (West Hartlepool), D. Hilton (Bath), L. Mai (London Scottish), S. Stewart (Blackburn), P. Walton (London), D. Peters (London), K. McCall (London), D. Dens (Preston), E. Peters (Bath, captain), Mai replaced by D. McGavin (London Scottish), 70min. (Man).

SOUTH: G. Althorpe (Kels), C. Joiner (Makau), S. North (Ormskirk), D. Grant (London), S. Peters (London), S. Welsh (Harrow), K. Reid (Harrow), G. Isaac (Glas), J. Hay (Harrow), S. McColl (Selkirk), S. Barber (Kels), R. Brown (Makau), G. Welsh (London), D. McCall (London), L. F. Ferrier (Edinburgh), captain Brown replaced by Eddie Hawick, 20min.

Referee: J. Fleming (Bath).

Lord moves to protect the insecure roots of paid game

By PHILIP WEBSTER
POLITICAL EDITOR

Gay expects transfer to promote England prospects

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

RICHARD GAY, the former England rugby league full-back, believes that his move to Castleford will promote his international career. The player, who yesterday signed a three-year deal with the club, said: "I really think that the move will give me a chance of international honours. I did not think Hull were going anywhere."

John Joyner and Castleford have given me that opportunity to progress my career. Hopefully, my goals will include achieving international honours."

Gay, 26, who holds 11 England caps, believes that his new side will be a force in the Super League this summer. "I would say that Castleford will go very well," he said. "They have a few new players injured at present but I am sure we will be a force to be reckoned with when the season starts."

He joined Hull in 1989 from Hull Boys A.R.L. In 184 appearances for the club, he scored 66 tries, mainly from full back. This season, he has scored ten tries from 13 appearances but has not played since injuring a hamstring before Christmas.

Gay is ineligible to play for Castleford's first team this season because his signing took place after the league and Challenge Cup deadlines.

John Joyner, the coach, said: "Richard is a good attacking full-back with plenty of pace. It is a shame that he cannot start with us this term but, while we hope for a cup run, the Super League is now league priority. Richard increases my options, but I am well aware that our squad still needs further strengthening."

Bradford Bulls have put Roger Simpson, their long-serving back, up for sale at £60,000. The decision came after a breakdown in talks between the club and the player regarding his future at Old Trafford Stadium, where he also works as a groundsman.

The Bulls intend to extend players' contracts to a full-time basis for the Super League, which begins in March. Simpson, 28, joined Bradford from Moldgreen, the amateur side, almost 11 years ago. He was selected for the Great Britain tour to New Zealand and Papua New Guinea in 1990 and played against France last year.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

BY ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

If you know that you can give your partner a ruff, when you do so, you should indicate which suit you would like him to return. The standard agreement is that, if you play a high card in the suit that partner is ruffing, you would like a return in the higher ranking of the other two suits (trumps are excluded) and vice versa. However, sometimes, a player giving a ruff is unsure which suit to request. Have a look at how the player getting the ruff helped his partner on the hand below:

Dealer North

Love all Pairs

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4-5-3-1 4-3-2-0 4-2-1-0

3-5-2-1 3-4-2-0 3-3-1-0

2-5-4-0 2-4-3-1 2-3-2-0

1-6-3-2 1-5-4-1 1-4-3-2

0-7-2-1 0-6-3-0 0-5-2-1

0-4-1-0 0-3-2-1 0-2-1-0

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Champions' prize in the hands of pot luck

Never mind the game, what did you make of the trophy? A dedicated rugby-supported who followed every kick and spit of the Heineken Cup match last weekend between Cardiff and Toulouse just could not believe his eyes. "Did you see that?" he asked, as Emile N'Tamack, the Toulouse captain, hauled the trophy into the air to celebrate victory. "It's the most bizarre thing I've ever seen. What kind of a cup is that?" Well, apparently it is the kind of cup that is worth £30,000, weighs in at seven kilograms and stands 50 centimetres high. Somewhere in the design are to be found a rugby ball, goalposts, a star or two from the European Union flag and a strong dose of the Heineken logo.

Would you, though, want it on your mantelpiece? Probably not, for the world of sporting cups, trophies, shields and medals is a strange, glittering and all too often, gaudy one. I blame the Victorians. A century and more ago, they were making desperate efforts to ring-fence their concept of the gentleman amateur. By mid-Victorian times, athletic contests were established on the programme of almost every town and

village festival and celebration. Every event advertised prizes to pull in the contestants, and the only way to cope with this within the amateur ethos was to replace them with prizes that were purely honorary — cups, shields and medals.

One of the curiosities of 19th-century trophies is that, whatever they looked like, they were almost always known as "cups", but there was often nothing that could, even in theory, hold a liquid. In fact, these "cups" were really free-standing and often ornate sculptures. Early commentators, particularly on athletics, were disturbed when these cups became the targets of "pot-hunters", and scandalised when the hard-won amateur prizes started turning up in pawnbrokers.

The London Athletic Club went as far as to introduce small golden shields for which chains as prizes, stating that they would be attractive to even the "most sordid of pot-hunters" — and probably in the hope that such delicate trophies would not end up in the pawn shops. A surprising number of sporting trophies have, though, sadly ended up in thieves' kitchens — so many have been stolen that it almost ranks as a sport in itself.



Heineken Cup:
greeted with
disbelieving eyes



The original English FA Cup, once described as a "modest silver bangle", was snatched from a shop window in 1895 and never recovered. There was quite an argument about whether it should be replaced by something fairer, but, in the event, the FA decided on an exact replica, even down to the names engraved upon it.

The Asot Gold Cup vanished in 1907 from the Royal Enclosure while King Edward VII was in attendance, and it, too, was never seen again.

The Lamont Gold Cup, which was awarded in 1924 on the spin of a coin after a dead heat, disappeared in 1941. The Grand National Cup followed it in 1951 and the solid gold Derby Cup in 1955. The Schweppes Gold Trophy, a solid gold statuette of a horse and jockey, galloped into the unknown in 1963, and the Queen's Trophy, awarded for Asot's King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes, followed it in 1977.

The Rugby League Cup, an elaborately embossed trophy standing 2ft 6in high, went missing from a Bradford hotel in 1970. It was found 20 years later by a motorist who stopped by a roadside to answer a call of nature. Most famous of all, of course, is the small, elegant golden Jules Rimet Trophy, the football world cup, which was stolen in March 1966 and found just a week later by a dog called Pickles. Perhaps the designers of the Heineken Cup intended it to be so hideous to discourage potential thieves.

Top sportsmen often betray a healthy indifference to the baubles of their victories. They are as likely to throw them into the back of a drawer as to dust and polish them every day. The work of art for them is the victory, not the silver-plated souvenir.

Ron Clarke, the multi-world record-breaking runner, who frustratingly missed out on winning an Olympic gold medal, tells a wonderful story about Emile Zatopek, who won four. Clarke had visited the old Czech champion while racing in Prague. As he was leaving at the airport, Zatopek pressed a small package into his hand with the instruction that he was not to open it until he had left the

country. Clarke opened the parcel after take-off. Inside was one of Zatopek's 10,000-metre Olympic golds, with a simple note to the man "who really deserved it".

The Olympics have so far avoided allowing the names of sponsors to creep on to their medals, but many cups and trophies exist primarily as a vehicle to push the image of the sponsor or patron — particularly, as with the Heineken European Cup, when the event is televised.

Sport, though, is nothing if not unpredictable. At a glittering exhibition of trophies, called Sporting Glory, at the Victoria and Albert Museum a couple of years ago, could be found life-size sculpture of an eagle made in black marble. It was a special commission ordered by Adolf Hitler to celebrate the anticipated triumph of the leading German 100-metre backstroke swimmer at the European championships in Magdeburg in 1934.

The trouble was that the German did not win. This Third Reich example of the trophy-maker's art ended up on the mantelpiece of one John Besford, a backstroke swimmer from Newcastle.

JOHN BRYANT

MARTIN BEDDOE

FA Cup retained its classical look



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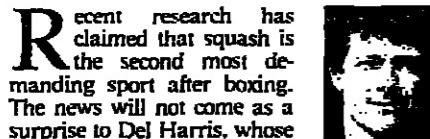
JOHN BRYANT

MARTIN BEDDOE

FA Cup retained its classical look

Del Boy insists that he is back on the straight and narrow

Andrew Longmore on how the new Jonah Barrington of squash hit the wall before bouncing back



Del Boy, the hard-drinking, hard-partying, couldn't-give-a-monkey's Essex lad. Squash? Who needs it? Having belatedly discovered life outside his four walls, Del Boy wanted to reclaim all those lost closing times; and he did so with the vengeance of depriv'd youth.

What started as a slipped disc in the back, the first serious injury of his career, turned rapidly into a ruptured mind and a haemorrhaged career. Fitness went, discipline evaporated and a spiral of defeat, disappointment and self-perceived failure was triggered by a headlong dash for the traditional pleasures of the young and eligible. He also suffered a bout of Bell's Palsy, a viral infection, that paralysed half of his face for three weeks.

"I was still playing," Harris said, "but I was just going through the motions. If anyone had come along at that time and offered me something else, I would have taken

it. I'd had enough." By Christmas 1992, Harris's athletic 6ft 2in frame had ballooned to 15 stone, earning him the nickname Mr Blobby at the Lenden Squash Club, his home base, and his world ranking had sunk to the low 30s. His friends tried to counsel him, without success.

"He is very single-minded and he just wouldn't listen," Dave Clarke, the club pro and an old mentor, said. "He had to work it out for himself." Harris cannot recall the exact moment that he managed the calculation. Having to borrow money off his parents, having to qualify for tournaments for the first time since he was 17, the stark realisation that he was trained to do nothing else. All pointed the way back. His obstinacy and determination, forces of destruction in his dark days, did the rest.

"It wasn't easy because, though I was hitting the ball well, I had just forgotten how to win," he said. "It was very frustrating. If I'd have lost a couple of matches along the way, I could have packed it in." Reaching two quarter-finals early in 1993 gave Harris the encouragement to train harder than ever through the summer and his confidence returned slowly with his fitness. Looking back now, Harris's strong face and measured tones betray a mixture of confusion and puritanical embarrassment.

"I should have taken a break from squash, but I didn't want my ranking to drop," he said. "At the time, I was under quite a lot of pressure because everyone was looking to me to be the next world champion. I felt that most when I began to fail. That was when all the expectations started to hit



Harris, national squash champion at 18, aims to regain the title in Birmingham this week

home and I thought: 'Hey, I'm a failure.'

"Before the game just came naturally. I'd never go on court with a game plan. Now, I change my style to suit different players and I know what I've been through and what I'm doing it."

Few, though, would have

expected Harris to crown his reigns quite so emphatically, by reaching the final of the World Open in November. The manner of his defeat by Jansher Khan, in four tight games and 101 minutes, confirmed Harris's place among the heirs to the great world champion.

The national championships, depleted by the withdrawal of Simon Parke, should hold no fears for the British No 1. The spirit of Del Boy remains, but within reason. "I know when to have a drink and when not to," he said. "I suppose I was rebelling really, I don't feel the urge to do that any more. I'm having a good time playing again."

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Nicol aiming to spike the English challenge

BY COLIN MCQUILLAN

ASSUMPTIONS that the QM national championships, that start at Edgbaston Priory, Birmingham, today, would consolidate a new English hierarchy at the head of British squash have been reduced in the men's championship: first, by the emergence of a Scot as top seed; and second, by the late withdrawal of the Simon Parke, the No 3 seed, because of appendicitis.

The Scottish challenge, from Peter Nicol, 22 and No 4 in the world, could produce the first British champion from north of the border since the event began as the British closed championship in 1974. He was no good for the English at the Mahindra Challenge in Bournemouth, the last important tour event of 1995.

Nicol is far from safe from surprises. Nick Taylor, of Manchester, a finalist last year, is in his quarter of the draw, along with Mark Cairns, who many considered unfortunate to miss selection for the England squad that

won the world team championship in November. With Parke out, the scheduled semi-final opponent for Nicol is Stephen Meads, who is trying to become the first man to successfully defend the title.

The bottom half of the men's draw is scheduled to produce a semi-final between Del Harris and Mark Chalmers, voted the Sports Writers' Association's newcomer of the year.

The women's field contains four former champions, with Cassandra Jackson, the world No 4 and winner in 1993, scheduled to play a final against Suzanne Horner, the world No 6 and winner in 1994. Fiona Geaves, the defending champion, is due for Jackson's semi-final, with Sue Wright, the champion in 1992, expected to meet Horner.

Nicol is far from safe from surprises. Nick Taylor, of Manchester, a finalist last year, is in his quarter of the draw, along with Mark Cairns, who many considered unfortunate to miss selection for the England squad that

WORD-SWATCHING

Answers from page 41

NUTASE
(b) Any enzyme that brings about a dismutation reaction, from the Latin *mutare* to change. "Aldehyde mutase brings about the Cannizzaro reaction. Here, two molecules of an aldehyde undergo an oxido-reaction."

HAMAMELIS
(a) A shrub or small tree of the genus so called, which is native to North America and eastern Asia, belongs to the family Hamamelidaceae, and includes several species bearing yellow flowers late in winter before the leaves appear; a witch-hazel. From the Greek for a mediary. "The concentration *Hamamelin* is used for pines mostly in form of suppositories."

NIPPY
(b) Formerly, a waitress in one of the restaurants of J. Lyons & Co. Ltd., London, a Lyons tearoom. Because she was "nippy" on her feet. "His hands stuck out in front of him like a Nippy carrying a tray."

HEVEA
(a) A South American tree of the genus so called, belonging to the family Euphorbiaceae, and having milky sap that provides rubber. From the French version of the native name in French Guiana. "The evaporation is known as hevea-late, since *Hevea brasiliensis* is only one of some four hundred plant species which elaborate juices containing rubber."

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1. Rook's King 2. Net? wins the black queen.

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DELUXE COMPUTER CROSSWORD

ILLINGWORTH READY
TO RING IN THE
CHANGES FOR ENGLAND

SPORT

THURSDAY JANUARY 11 1996

RUGBY UNION 41

SCOTLAND KEEP
FAITH WITH
TRIED AND TESTED

Coach to stand down after European championship to concentrate on court battles

Venables leaves FA in muddle over England

By ROB HUGHES, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

SO MUCH of the life and times of Terry Venables has the fictional quality of an episode of *EastEnders* that one hesitates even now to accept as final the announcement that he will be the England coach only until the country is eliminated — or victorious — in the European championship this summer.

So much of the Football Association's thinking is more muddled than any soap opera that one wonders whether the FA wants him, trusts him or can cope with the litigation and innuendo around him. For all the apparent logic in Venables's statement last night, in which he said he must give his time in the autumn to fighting Alan Sugar, the Tottenham Hotspur chairman, in the High Court, there is the nagging truth that the legal implications were known at Lancaster Gate before he even crossed the threshold. So, if resignation after Euro '96 is irreversible, is it a premature announcement, or one that comes two years too late?

One must learn to never say never when it comes to Venables. One often has to read between the lines of his statements and his actions. "In the circumstances, the things I've got ahead could be problematical," he said with understatement yesterday. "Around October or November [when England play vital World Cup qualifying games] I could be in

court, and that's something I feel I have to do. It may be a bit of an embarrassment for the FA, and if that were OK with my employers, it would be no problem. But there will always be people who say that it is a distraction... but this makes me even more determined to leave the job on a successful note. I will do everything in

championship. Why should anyone expect that he has earned an extension to that deal, one that could possibly have cost the FA the better part of £500,000?

You cannot judge a man after 14 uncompetitive matches. The record of only six wins, only 20 goals and, indeed, only one defeat, tells us little, because the word friendly has been paramount to his work and that of the opposition. Friendly implies experimentation, it denotes that the result need not necessarily be counted, that both managers are searching for rhythm, teamwork, using the play as a platform for the future.

I will declare my hand. I would not, on the basis of a series of friendly games, reappoint any manager, any coach, and I would be greatly concerned by the allegations that continue to come, as regularly as London buses, with Venables. The FA seems as confused now as it was in the beginning when, two years ago, Sir Bert Millichip, its ageing chairman, stated that Venables would be coach "over my dead body", and promptly helped to appoint him. Alas, Millichip's legacy — for, at 82, he has given notice that he will retire this summer — is another muddle.

Millichip was ready to extend the contract, but neither he nor anyone has a clue who will succeed him as chairman. How, then, could Millichip know if the next leader of football in England would support the reappointment?

The priority at Lancaster Gate should be obvious. The FA must move quicker than usual and accelerate the nomination of the next chairman before it even contemplates the new coach. It is no good calling Ian Stott and Noel White, two members of the 15-man international committee, judges for their public disquiet over the way the media and Sir Bert appeared to be hastening towards a new contract for Venables. Rather, these two might be seen as the two wise men of the committee, the two reasonable and questioning minds.

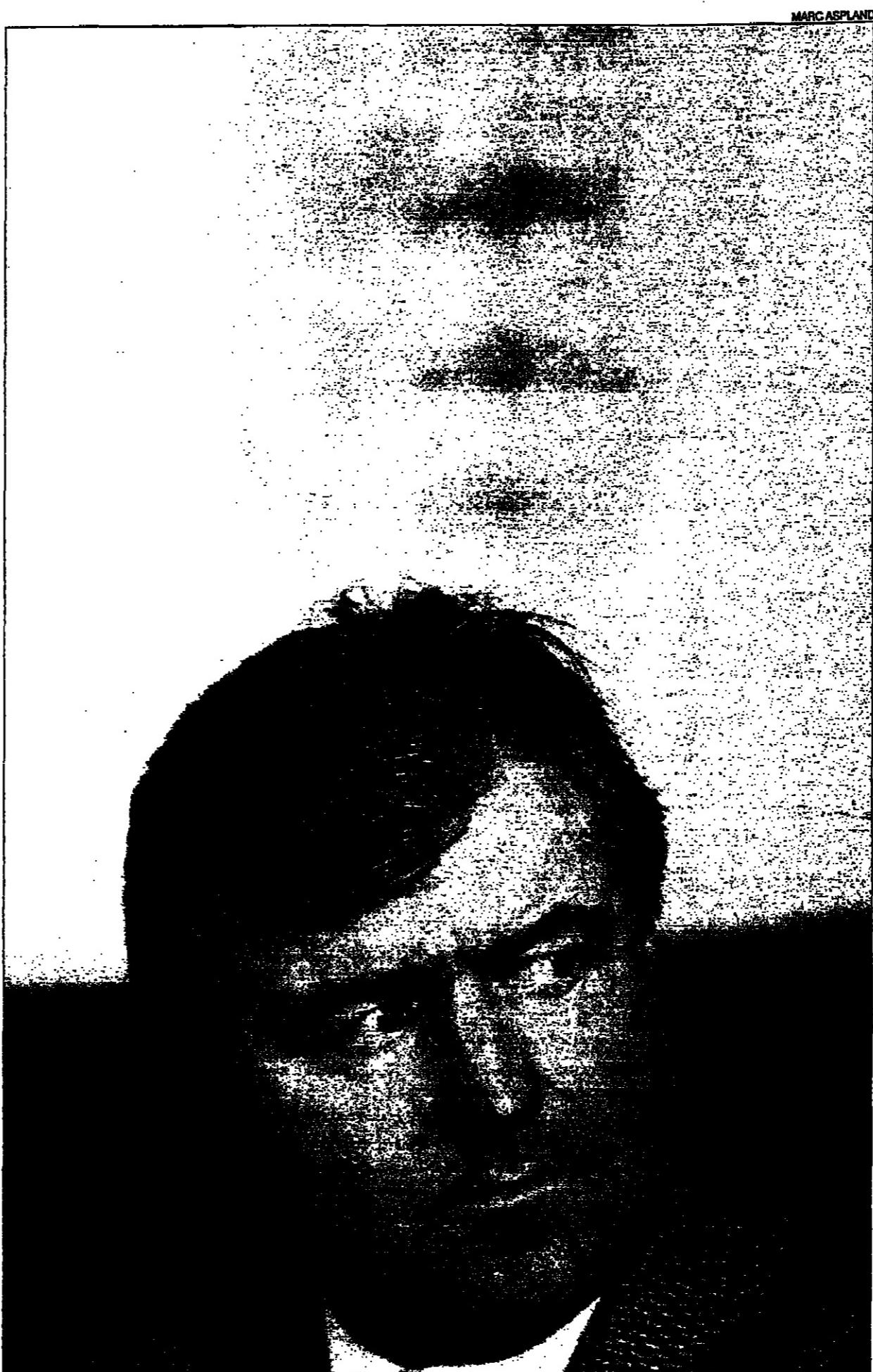
The whole of football would prefer to isolate the football man, and not the beleaguered private man, and get behind Venables. "They should have left him alone to do his job," Fred Venables, Terry's father, said on Radio 5 Live yesterday. "Terry is a football man, I don't think they can get anyone in this country better than him, and now they'll have to try, won't they?"

Indeed they will. Immediate candidates who come to mind are Kevin Keegan, for his flair and inspiration, Bryan Robson, because he is a coach in

VENABLES' RECORD

	Result	England	Opponent	Goals	W	D	L	F	A
Mar 17, 1994	England 0	Denmark 0			0	0	0	0	0
May 22, 1994	England 0	Greece 0			0	0	0	0	0
Sept 7, 1994	England 0	US 0			0	0	0	0	0
Oct 16, 1994	England 1	Nigeria 0			1	0	0	0	0
Mar 29, 1995	England 0	Uruguay 0			0	0	0	0	0
June 3, 1995	England 2	Spain 1			2	0	1	1	0
June 11, 1995	England 3	Sweden 3			3	0	0	0	0
Sept 6, 1995	England 0	Colombia 0			0	0	0	0	0
Nov 15, 1995	England 1	Portugal 0			1	0	0	0	0
Dec 12, 1995	England 1	Portugal 1			1	0	0	0	0
How Venables compares to former England coaches		P W D L F A							
Wat Barlow Winterbottom	14 12 2 0 54 11								
Sir Alf Ramsey	14 10 1 3 51 22								
Don Revie	14 9 4 1 129 8								
Howard Wilkinson	14 7 5 2 36 9								
Bobby Robson	14 10 3 1 22 8								
Graham Taylor	14 6 7 1 20 10								
Terry Venables	14 6 7 1 20 10								

my power to make it so." The fact is that Venables and the FA are announcing their parting of the ways before anything in the football sense is proven for or against him. They gave him a contract, an act of faith when he was out of work and even then entangled in a legal quagmire, up to and including the European



Venables has had much to think about, on and off the field, during his brief tenure as the England coach

FA chose to ignore warning signs

By PETER BALL

PERHAPS the greatest surprise in Terry Venables's decision to stand down as England coach is not his failure to gain support from the Football Association (FA) now, but the fact that he was given the position at all. If his troubles off the field show no sign of ending, they were visible before he was appointed.

"I think there are many people who would like to see Venables as England manager, but he has this funny reputation," Sir Bert Millichip, the FA chairman, said on January 13, 1994. Three days later, even though *The Financial Times* had published an article questioning Venables's business dealings, Millichip had put those qualms aside, suggesting that, if Venables should be appointed to coincide with the European championship draw, "it would be a marvellous publicity stunt".

Sadly, much of Venables's publicity since then has undermined him. Before he was appointed as England coach, the war with Alan Sugar, the Tottenham Hotspur chairman, had already reached the courts, Venables failing in his attempt to regain control of the club. A *Panorama* programme in 1993 had raised questions about the way that he had financed his share of the purchase of Tottenham.

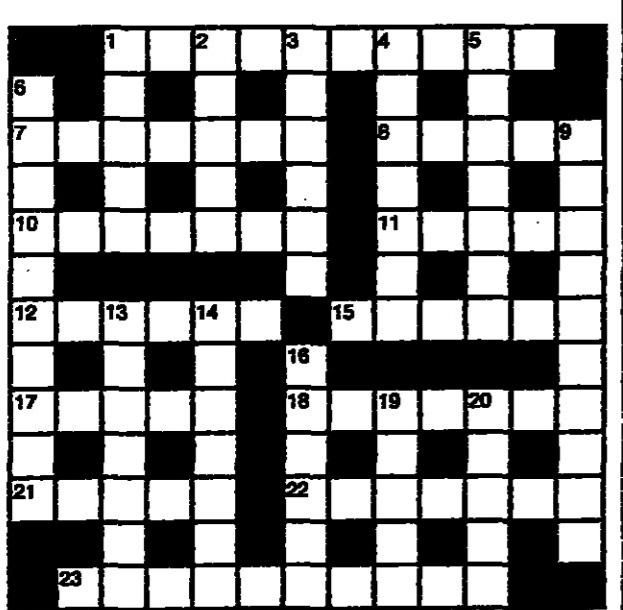
Doubts had been raised about the £200,000 paid to Gino Santini over the transfer of Paul Gascoigne. It was alleged by Sugar that £50,000 was paid to Frank McLintock as a "bung" for Brian Clough. That became the subject of a police inquiry, but was dropped for lack of evidence. Edmonte, Venables's company which was at the centre of his purchase of Tottenham, was wound up on petition from Tottenham in May 1994.

The costs of his court cases, however, continued to linger, and Scribes West, his club, has also been involved in his financial problems.

Venables is being sued by Sugar for libel after statements in his autobiography, while Venables, himself, intends to resort to the courts to clear his name with writs against *Panorama* among others.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

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ACROSS
1 Literary back-work world (6)
7 Instance (7)
8 Unseeing (5)
10 Tidy; instructed (7)
11 Diagram; map (5)
12 Flight to safety (6)
15 Old medium-distance club (6)
17 Brilliant distinction (5)
18 Droplets-prayer (7)
21 Indian Jun-tent (5)
22 One from North East Spain (7)
23 Crime and Punishment author (10)

DOWN
1 Impressive; splendid (5)
2 Higher (5)
3 Solid, constant; regular (6)
4 D. Du Maurier novel; wife of Isaa (7)
5 Tombstone message (7)
6 Plot resolution (10)
9 On which one signs (6,4)
13 Greek nymph; Caribbean song (7)
14 NHS customer; virtuous as Griselda (7)
16 Socially awkward (6)
19 Old property tax (5)
20 Foolish; close (cricket) (5)

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SOLUTION TO NO 674
ACROSS: 1 Minigun 5 Odds 8 Castaway 9 Bung 11 Elegy
12 Measles 13 Hazard 15 Proton 18 Schiss 19 Color 21 Lair
22 Informal 23 Oral 24 Sensuous
DOWN: 1 Macbeth 2 Taste 3 Gravy train 4 Trauma 6 Doubtless
7 Sage 10 Capricious 14 Zuleika 16 Nonplus 17 Whinge 18 Salvo
20 Limbo

Respect for past, fears for future

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

TERRY VENABLES'S decision to stand down this summer shocked many within the domestic game. Players and managers were quick to praise the England coach and to reflect on the problems that his post carried with it.

Craig Brown, his Scotland counterpart, said: "I have the utmost respect for Terry as a coach and that's all that matters — I am not concerned about off-the-field matters."

"Of course, international managers are conscious of the image that they must portray and the fact that we have to uphold traditions. And I'm sure that Terry acts with honesty and integrity."

Brown might play a part in bringing Venables's reign to an early close if his side were to prevent England from qualifying for the knockout stages of the championships when they meet at Wembley in June. "England will be a very difficult game for us in the European championships due in great part to Terry's skill as a coach," he said.

Bobby Gould, the Wales manager, said: "Terry played at the top level and has been a manager a long time. He

knew what was happening when they took him on and knew the situation all along.

"One has to make sure that people can't get at you and Terry has been exposed in this area. Terry's problem is that he hasn't had competitive games."

Bryan Hamilton, the Northern Ireland manager, said: "Terry Venables is a very talented football coach and he hasn't had the easiest of jobs as England manager."

"He's done extremely well



Lineker: does not think England's chances this summer will be affected



Gould: feels Venables struggled due to lack of competitive games

to build up the team towards the European championships. What has gone on with the FA is his own private matter."

Darren Anderton was "shocked and saddened" by the news. The England midfield player, signed by Venables when he was manager of Middlesbrough and his coaching experience with England are in their infancy. And even his presence inside Venables's team cannot compensate for the lack of experience. Keegan might be the ideal person to cope with the media circus but Francis is available if willing.

Gould, having driven out

Venables and continued to hound him, would thus be deprived of the club manager who has lately been Totten-

ham's saviour. A final twist of irony in the "factional" world around the Venables story.

It is not yet goodbye, not even au revoir. It is clarification of what the original contract offered, a chance to guide England to the European championship. "Do what you gotta do, sunshine," Fred Venables said in Dagenham last night. "Don't worry about Terry, he can take them all right." In the purely footballing sense, one can only hope there is something in this parental plea.

Final decision, page 41

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